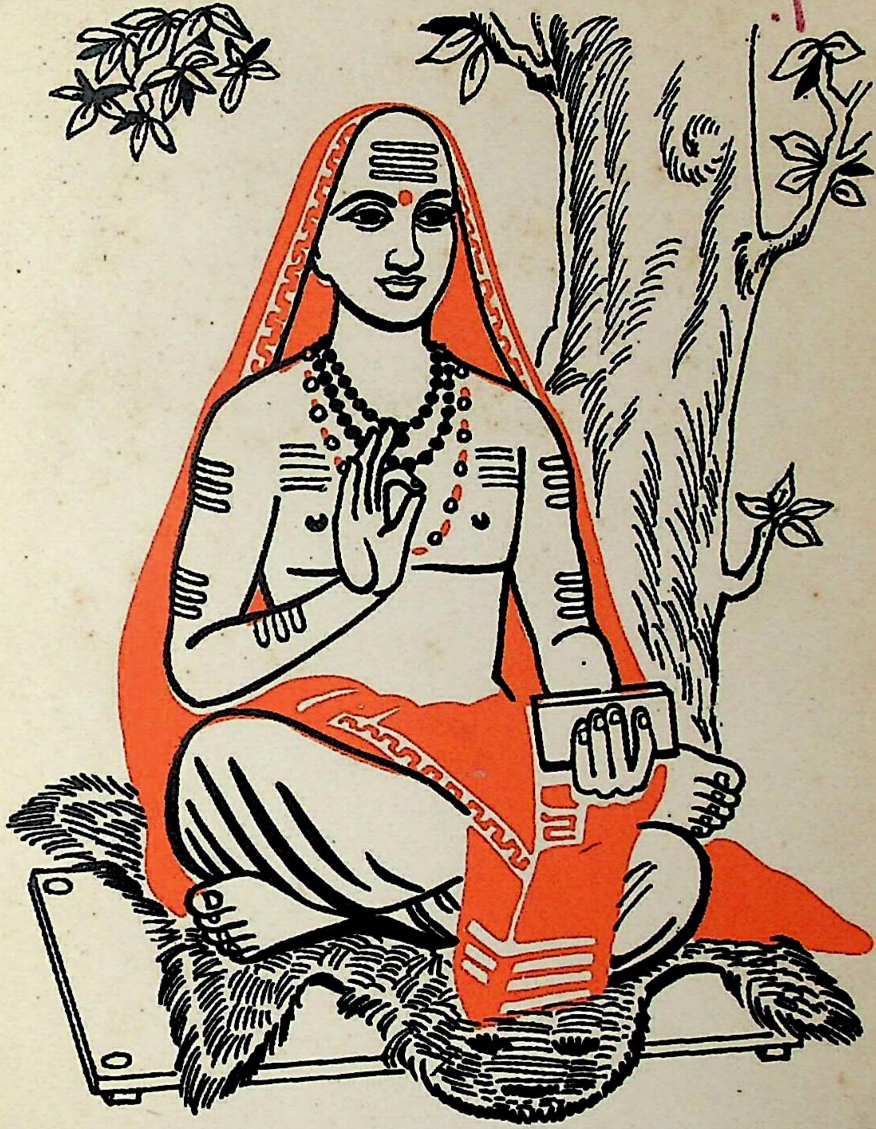
BHAJA GOVINDAM

By

BHAGWAN SHRI SANKARACHARYA

SWAMI CHINMAYANANDA

THE GREAT HINDU MISSIONARY



नम इदं श्री दक्षिणामूर्तये !

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Commentary

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INTRODUCTION

Bhagavadpada Acharya Sankara was not only a great thinker and the noblest of Adwaitic philosophers, but he was essentially an inspired champion of Hinduism and one of the most vigorous missionaries in our country. Such a powerful leader was needed at that time, when Hinduism had been almost broken up within the enticing entanglements of the Buddhistic philosophy, and consequently the decadent Hindu society came to be broken up and disunited into numberless sects and denominations, each championing a different viewpoint and mutually quarrelling in endless argumentations. Each pundit, as it were, had his own followers, his own philosophy, his own interpretation. Each one was a vehement and powerful opponent of all other views. This intellectual disintegration, especially in the scriptural field was never before so serious and so dangerously calamitous as in the times of Sree Sankara.

It was at such a time, when our society was fertile for any ideal thought or practical philosophy to thrive, the beautiful values of non-injury, self-control, love and affection of the Buddha came to enchant alike the kings and their subjects of this country. But the general decadence of the age did not spare the Buddhists also, and they among themselves precipitated different viewpoints, and by the time Sankara appeared in the horizon of the Hindu history, the atheistic school of Buddhists (*Asad-vadis*) had enticed away large sections of the Hindu folk.

It is into such a chaotic intellectual atmosphere that Sankara brought his life-giving philosophy of the Non-dual Brahman of the Upanishads. It can be very well understood what a colossol work it must have been for any one single man to undertake in those days,* when modern conveniences of mechanical transport and instruments of propaganda were unknown.

The genius in Sankara did solve the problem and by the time he had placed at rest his mortal coil he had whipped the false Buddhistic ideology beyond the shores of our country, and had reintegrated the philosophical thoughts in the then Aryavarta. After her centuries of wandering, no doubt richer for her various experiences, but tired and fatigued, Bharat came back to her own native thoughts.

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* 7th-9th A.D. centuries.

In his missionary work of propagating the great philosophical truths of the Upanishads and of re-discovering through them the true cultural basis of our nation, Acharya Sankara had a variety of efficient weapons in his resourceful armoury. He was indeed pre-eminently the fittest genius who alone could have undertaken this self-appointed task as the sole guardian-angel of the Rish-culture.

An exquisite thinker, a brilliant intellect, a personality scintillating with the vision of Truth, a heart throbbing with industrious faith and ardent desire to serve the nation, sweetly emotional and relentlessly logical, in Sankara the Upanishads discovered the fittest Spiritual General.

It was indeed a vast programme that Sankara had to accomplish within the span of about twenty effective years; for at the age of thirty-two he had finished his work and had folded up his manifestation among the mortals of the world.

He had brought into his work his literary dexterity, both in prose and poetry, and at his hands, under the heat of his fervent ideals, the great Sanskrit language became almost plastic.

He could mould it into any shape and into any form. From vigorous prose, heavily laden with irresistable arguments, to flowing rivulets of tilting tuneful songs of love and beauty, there is no technique in language that Sankara did not take up; and whatever form he took up he proved himself to be a master in it. From masculine prose to soft feminine songs, from marching militant verses to dancing songful words, be he in the halls of the Upanishad commentaries, or in the temple of the Brahma-Sutra expositions, or in the amphitheatre of his Bhagawad Geeta discourses, or in the open flowery fields of his devotional songs, his was a pen that danced itself to the rhythm of his heart, and to the swing of his thoughts.

Pen alone would not have won the war of culture for our country. He showed himself a great organizer, a far-sighted diplomat, a courageous hero and a tireless servant of the country. Selfless and unassuming, this mighty angel strode up and down the length and breadth of the country, serving his motherland and teaching his countrymen to live up to the dignity and glory of Bharat. Such a vast programme can neither be accomplished by an individual nor sustainedly kept up without institutions of great discipline and perfect organization. Establishing the mutts, opening up temples, organizing halls of education and even establishing certain ecclesiastical legislations, this mighty master left nothing undone in maintaining what he achieved.

"Bhaja Govindam" is one of the seemingly smaller, but in fact extremely important work of Adi Sankara. Here the fundamentals of Vedanta are taught in simple, musical verses, so that even from early childhood, the children of the Rishies can grow up amidst the melody of Adwaita. The musical rhythm in these stanzas makes it easy even for children to remember and repeat these pregnant verses. For an intelligent young man, a sincere study of this poem, can remove all his delusions (*Moha*), and so the poem is also called as *Moha-Mudgara.*

A popular story describes the circumstances in which this great poem broke out from the inspiring heart of the Teacher. It* is said that once in Benares as Sankara along with fourteen of his disciples (*followers*) was going along, he overheard an old pundit repeating to himself grammar rules, and at this futile effort put forth for a mere intellectual accomplishment and thus wasting his time in life without realising the spiritual unfoldment in himself, Acharya is said to have burst forth into these stanzas,

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* At the end of *Dwadasa-manjarika-stotra,* we read "DWADASA MANJARIKABHIRASESH KATHITO VAIYAKARANASYA-ISHA UPADESO ABHUDVIDYANIPUNAIH SHRIMAD-SANKARA-BHAGAVAD-CHARANAIH".

famous as Moha Mudgara, now popularly known as *"Bhaja Govindam".* "Grammar rules will never help any one at the time of death. While living, strive to realise the deathless state of purity and perfection."

Taking the opening stanza as a refrain, or chorus, to be chanted for emphasis at the end of each of the following verses tradition has it that the immediately following twelve stanzas were given out by the Acharya himself. They together go under the name of the *"Dwadasa Manjarika-Stotram".* "Very contagious must have been the Teacher's inspired mood, and the exploding poem, that each of his followers, at that time in his company, contributed a stanza of his own, and they together stand today under the title of the *"Chaturdasa-Manjarika Stotram."* After listening to all the verses, Sankara blesses all true seekers of all times in the last four stanzas.

This set of thirty-one stanzas, together titled as *Moha Mudgara,* had been there very popular in our country for a long period of time now. Whenever a chant becomes too popular in a country it is but natural that it gets published again and again by various institutions, and slowly different types of readings get to be equally popular. Some of the alternative readings we have noted here and there in our commentaries.

In some editions of this poem *Moha Mudgara,* we have less number of stanzas; in some the sequence of stanzas are different; in some the second half of one stanza is read with the first half of another stanza—sometimes lines are interchanged, and sometimes the words are slightly changed. And yet, in none of them, nowhere is the essential spirit of the verses found to have been noticeably tampered with.

The first 12-verses of this poem as it now stands is together called as the *Dwadasa-Manjarika-Stotram* (a bouquet of 14 stanza-flowers). A bouquet of fresh blooms is beautiful and rewarding even to look at from a distance. Similarly, even to hear these stanzas chanted is thrilling enough. And for the industrious bees, that are capable of courting the flowers and entering deeper into them, there is always the sweeter honey as a special and extra reward. So too, to the students, who are capable of entering beneath the superficial joys of the metrical rhythm and thus delve deeper into the philosophical implications suggested in these verses, there is real nectar——a consoling philosophy, a satisfying view-of-life in the poem *Bhaja Govindam.*

Though it is classified as a Devotional Song *(Stotram)* the chorus alone can be truly designated as a prayer verse. The rest of the thirty stanzas, with scientific precision, dissect the shell of thoughtlessness, that veil the glory in man, and forces him to be helplessly stupid in his relationship with the world outside. The verses on the whole can be considered as a "book of categories" *(Prakriya),* in the Science of Vedanta.

Unlike the other manuals of Vedanta——Atma Bodh, Vivekachudamani, Panchadasi and others——"Bhaja Govindam" gives, within the limited canvas of its composition, a more eloquent picture of the art of realization and a deeper diagnosis for the human unhappiness. It not only indicates to the students the goal and the path, but also reveals unto him the wretchedness of his present way-of-life, the horrors of his present values-of-life and the dire consequences that await him if he continues to pursue the path of ego and desire.

This simple-looking *Stotra* is not addressed to other equally vehement philosophers and erudite disputants. Naturally, it contains, therefore, no elaborate logical argumentations to prove Sankara's own philosophical standpoint. Nor has the author wasted any labour in breaking other unhealthy and unholy misbeliefs. In short, there are no dialectics in these stanzas.

These are addressed to seekers as a book-of-instruction to help them walk the path straight to their goal. It contains ideas that can refresh the seekers on their path. The students whom Sankara admonishes with these stanzas are already pilgrims, all of them, who, perhaps, are walking slow under the crushing load of their own fatigue. This is a text-book of advice *(Upadesa)* and not a book of disputation *(Vada)*. In "Bhaja Govindam" we meet with a teacher who is softly advising his own beloved disciples, in the secret chambers of his own sacred retreat.

A disciple *(Sishya)* is (a)* one who is taught by the teacher, (b)† is one who has become improved——has become now relatively more introvert, having left the extrovertedness that he had in the past—— as a result of his study of the contents of the *Sastras* (c)‡ one who controls and curbs the activities of one's own sense-organs.

Therefore, a true disciple is one who is being taught by the teacher, and who, as a result of the understanding so gathered, has now become more and more introvert than what he was before, and is one who has started independently to curb and control all his sense-appetites and the vagaries of his emotions and thoughts. Such disciples were the audience to whom "Bhaja Govindam" is addressed.

If these stanzas are not silencing the arguments of the opponents of Adwaita, they are not in any sense of the term a mild, soft, musical chant that gurgles through a heart of soft emotions and generates but a feeling of divine sentiments temporarily in a man-of-heart. There is no such softness about this. These thirty stanzas have a crack-whip style and effect about them. There is no softness, no delicate consideration in the approach to correct the erring man. It whips up——it slashes with a cruel cat's-tail on the back of man——because of the urgency. When the house is on fire, no formalities need be respected in waking up your respected parents, wife or children. The urgency of the moment needs that they must be awakened immediately. Thus, here, in *Moha Mudgara* are a few criminally sweet slashes, with a kindly cruel whip of horrible impatience, coming with a hateful love for the welfare of the beloved disciples——still sleeping in *Samsara*—sorrows ——when the house of life is ablaze with death.

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* Sikshathe ithi shishyah

† Sishyata Vishishyate Sastradi Parignanea Bahirmukha Apekshaya Ithi Shishyah.

‡ Indriyadi Pravrithim Sikshyati Ithi Shishyah.

MOHA-MUDGARA

भज गोविन्दं

SEEK GOVIND

[1]

भज गोविन्दं भज गोविन्दं
गोविन्दं भज मूढमते ।
संप्राप्ते सन्निहिते काले
न हि न हि रक्षति डुकृञ्करणे ॥

Bhaja Govindam, Bhaja Govindam
Govindam Bhaja Mudhamate
Samprapte Sannihite Kale
Na Hi Na Hi Rakshati Dukringkarane

भज – Seek, गोविन्दं – Govind; भज – Seek, गोविन्द – Govind; गोविन्दं – Govind, भज – Seek; मूढमते – Oh ! Fool, संप्राप्ते – (when) comes सन्निहिते – appointed, काले – time (Death); न हि – surely never, न हि – surely never, रक्षति – saves, डुकृञ् करणे – Grammar rule (डुकृञ् – to do).

Seek Govind, Seek Govind, Seek Govind, Oh Fool, when the appointed time comes (death), grammar-rules surely will not save you.

This opening stanza is considered as a chorus and it is generally repeated at the end of each of the following verses. "Bhaja Govindam" is a chant that is generally sung in congregations. The leader sings each verse and the entire audience takes up the refrain, "Bhaja Govindam, Bhaja Govindam". In this refrain-verse the disciple is asked to pack up his heart with thoughts of God rather than with his anxieties to acquire, hoard or possess secular accomplishments or even achievements.

The grammar-rule that has been indicated here stands for "all secular knowledge and possessions." The grammatical formula mentioned herein *Dukringkarane* is from *Dhatoopath* of Panini's grammar treatise, *Sidhanta Kowmudi.*

The import of this condemnation that all grammar, and such other secular sciences, cannot save the soul when death reaches to snatch the individual away from this limited ambit of temporary existence here in the world, reminds us of a similar situation in the Chandogya Upanishad, where Narada approaches Sanatkumara humbly begging for initiation into the Great Knowledge. The teacher rightly asks, "tell me all that you already know, so that I may instruct you in what you do not know." Narada thereupon gives an endless and brilliant list of sciences that he had already mastered—from astrology and astronomy to literature and art, music and dance, all the varied sciences etc., at which Sanatkumara says, "these are all mere names. The Infinite *(Bhum)* is to be realised. It exceeds all these". It is interesting to note that in the list of Narada's accomplishments, grammar was also especially mentioned.

Knowledge of Grammar is, no doubt, necessary. It is means to an end. To understand rightly the *Sastra*-declarations, and even to appreciate fully the advices of the teacher, grammar is useful. But to waste our precious life time in the pursuit of all these non-essentials, and never taking up seriously the study of the greatest of sciences, which alone can save man from the thraldom of imperfections, is being condemned here by Acharya Sankara.

For, when death comes to erase you out of existence in this manifested world, of what use is your science for you ? Of what charm is the art that you have mastered ? Of what help is the knowledge of grammar then ? While living here man's greatest endeavour is to understand and master the secret of life, the Reality behind them, and to gain his perfect identification with it. He must be able to meet death, not as a moment of utter annihilation, but as a spring-board to rocket himself into an Eternal Existence, peaceful and divine.

There is a set of optimistic men of mere book-knowledge who quote Geeta and say that at the time of parting they shall remember the Lord and thus achieve all that is to be achieved; in the Geeta it is said that "one who leaves the mortal coil remembering Me, he is saved."* Book-knowledge cannot save us from the unrelenting Law; the Law is the Lord. Even in the Geeta it is said : "*Anthakale cha*". The importance of the conjunction "*cha*" is not generally well realised. Sankara in his commentary explains that this conjunction "*cha*" stands for "all the life through *and* at the time of parting."†

The term "*Bhaja*" means "*worship.*" It is not merely a ritualistic routine and monotonous flower-throwing or a mechanical chanting of some selected mantras or hymns. "Seeking our identity with the Lord" is true *Bhajan,* true *Seva—"Service"*. Be it in your private chapel or in a public temple, the "services" conducted therein, no doubt, have been regularised, in all religions, with certain codes of instructions; this is only to bring a uniformity throughout the country. To go through those movements is at best only a "religious drill." True *Bhajan* is a total subjective surrender, in love and devotion, at the Altar of the Lord, as conceived by the devotee.

This process of self-liquidation at the Feet of the Lord has been classified under nine types, according to the means adopted : 1. listening to the glory of the Lord *(Sravanam);* 2. singing the glory of the Beloved of your heart *(Kirtanam);* 3. constantly thinking about his nature and beauty *(Samaranam);* 4. adoring the Feet of the Lord in a spirit of self-obliteration *(Padasevanam);* 5. with the help of selected mantras and sacred vedic hymns, employing the necessary things prescribed for it, to worship the Lord *(Archanam);* 6. to pay obeissance to the Lord *(Vandanam);* 7. serving *(Dasyam);* 8. to invoke Him affectionately and to discuss with Him as a friend

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* Anthakale Cha Mameva Smaranmuktwa Kalebaram—Refer Swamy's Geeta-Discourses: VII-5.

† Poorvamapi Anthakale cha.

(Sakyam), and lastly, 9. to offer oneself, in a total self-surrender, as a humble gift at His Altar *(Atmanivedanam)*.

In all of them there is a spirit of worship *'Bhaja'* employed. The essence in all worship *(Bhajanam)* is "service" (*Seva*). *Iswara Seva* is *Iswara Bhajanam* ; no doubt, *Jana-Seva* is certainly *Janardana-seva.*

The term *'Govind'* to indicate Vishnu appears twice in the *Vishnu Sahasranama**. Sankara in his commentary explains etimologically this term to mean in four different ways, the same Highest Reality, the Supreme Brahman. He dissolves the word *'Govind'* in the following four ways : (1) He who finds or knows the earth—meaning, one who has realised the substratum upon which the world-play is going on; (2) He who is the Lord of the Cattle—not only as the Divine Cowherd-boy of Gokul, but as the very Life-giving Factor behind all animal-passions, and the very Essence behind the living kingdom; (3) He who confers speech†—the very power because of which all living creatures, through the medium of speech, convey knowledge mutually to each other, be it in the braying of an ass, or in the barking of a dog, or in the thunderous eloquence of a speaker, and (4) He who is known through the Veda-texts—the very Supreme Reality indicated by the Great Statements (*Maha-Vakyas*).

In short, *Govind* stands for the Essence, the Atman, which is the Truth behind the ever-changing flux of things that constitute the universe of our experiences. *Govind* is the Brahman of the Upanishads. He is the Highest Reality, the Great God. Therefore, *Bhaja Govindam* means "seek your identity with *Govind,* the Supreme," and do not waste your time in mere grammar hunting and in such other really unprofitable pursuits of secular knowledge, of worldly possessions, of ephemeral fame and of passing joys.

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* Used in both 33rd and 71st stanzas.

† "Yena Vachanabhyuthitam, Yena Vakabhyudhyatae, Tadeva Brahmattawam Vidhi, Naidam Yadidamupasathe—" Refer Swamiji's Discourses on Kenopanishad—

[2]

मूढ जहीहि धनागमतृष्णां
कुरु सद्बुद्धिं मनसि वितृष्णाम् ।
यल्लभसे निजकर्मोपात्तं
वित्तं तेन विनोदय चित्तम् ॥
(भज-गोविन्दं, भज-गोविन्दं....)

Moodha Jaheehi Dhanagamatrishnam
Kuru Sadbudhim Manasi Vitrishnam
Yallabhase Nijakarmoppatham
Vitham Tena Vinodaya Chitham
(Bhaja Govindam Bhaja Govindam.........)

मूढ – Oh ! Fool !, जहीहि – give up, धन आगम तृष्णां – the thirst to possess wealth, कुरु – create, सद् बुद्धिं – thoughts of Reality, मनसि – in (your) mind, वितृष्णां – devoid of passions, यत् – with whatever, लभसे – you get, (as a reward of the past), निज कर्म – by your actions, उपात्तं – obtained, वित्त – the wealth, तेन – with that, विनोदय – entertain, चित्तं – (your) mind.

भज – Seek*, गोविन्दं – Govinda......

Oh, Fool ! Give up the thirst to possess wealth. Create in your mind, devoid of passions, thoughts of the Reality. With whatever you get (as a reward of the past) entertain your mind (be content).

(Seek Govind, Seek Govind.........)

The extrovert personality wanders away from Reality to get himself enmeshed in the finite experiences of joys, and seeks his fulfilments in the world outside. Desire for possessing, acquiring, hoarding and enjoying is the only motive-force that takes man out of his own inner equipoise into the stormy realms of lust and greed. By so doing man gets himself involved in the sorrows of *Samsar,* although he is really the inheritor of endless peace and perfection.

One who comes to suffer from one's own ignorance is called a fool (*Moodah*). Sankara hits the nail on the head of the entire problem of the sorrows-in-life, when he appeals to man to give up "the thirst to possess wealth". Here the term "wealth" *(Dhanam)* is to be understood in the largest sense of the term. It includes in its embrace all worldly objects of possession with which the possessor vainly feels a temporary satisfaction.

Wealth in itself is innocent, Philosophy is not against wealth. It is not said here : "renounce wealth", but only the insatiable thirst *(trshna)* for wealth that is to be given up. "Desire-for-wealth" is the relationship that the individual keeps subjectively with the objects of the world, which he believes can probably give him happiness. The objects outside are not to be condemned; but man's relationship with them is to be intelligent and chaste.

When the mind is thus cleansed of passions, with a passionless mind *(Vi-thrishna)*, one must meditate upon the Reality. If the mind is withdrawn from its present preoccupations, it becomes empty—and nature abhors vacuum. If the mind is withdrawn from the objects of its entertainment, it gathers in itself an infinite momentum, and if it cannot discover for itself a creative field of self-application, it is sure to dissipate itself again into a different set of objects.

Cleanse the mind off its lust for objects, greed for possessions, covetousness for wealth, and apply the same mind in the fields of contemplation upon the Real, the Enduring, the Eternal.

The practical man of the world at this advice of the philosopher asks a pertinent question: "If possessions are not to be courted, if wealth is not to be acquired, how are we to live?" If a philosopher is impractical, the man of the world has got enough commonsense to throw up the philosophy and walk his path of joyous fulfilment. No honest philosopher can afford to preach something impractical and impossible.

Sankara here indicates how we must live in the world. His advice to us is to live joyously in contentment and satisfaction at what we would get "as a result of our actions." There is no limit to human imagination. An individual who has given reins to it can never stop at any conceivable point. Desires multiply the more we satisfy them. The more the desires are satisfied, the more seems to be the hunger, and the deeper gnaws into our peace a sense of tragic dissatisfaction.

Man seeks satisfaction in life, but wealth can purchase for us only sense-gratifications. Temporarily, no doubt, the passion in us seems to get fulfilled, but ere-long the thirst *(trshna)* returns back to our bosom to persecute us the more ruthlessly, and that too with a merciless tyranny. To discover a sense of contentment, and live on what we acquire with our honest labour, and not to feed our covetousness, seem to be the only method by which true happiness and inner peace can be gained. In such a bosom alone the higher contemplations and the consequent discoveries of the new dimensions of the Spiritual Reality are ever possible.

Desire for wealth degrades man. Attachment brings endless worries. There is strain in acquiring. There is struggle to preserve intelligently what one has acquired. There is pain when one comes to lose what one had acquired laboriously. There is anxiety to preserve what one has already gained. This is a game of restless sorrows only.

In Kathopanishad* the young boy Nachiketas in his answer to his teacher, Lord Death, has beautifully expressed this idea: "man is never satisfied with his possessions alone." Again, Sankara in his Vivekachudamani† quotes the famous statement of the Brhadaranyaka Upanisad and says that "the Deathless and the Imperishable can never be hoped to gain through possession of wealth."

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* "Na Vithena tharpaneeyo manushyah"—(Katho I) Read Swamiji's Discourses on Kathopanishad.

† "Amruthatvasya naasaasthi vitteneyteva hi Sruthih"—Vivekachudamani.

What we have to leave in life is *only* our sense of covetousness, and with this renunciation comes the true enjoyment of the world outside. This open promise we read in the Isavasyopanishad:* "renounce and enjoy, covet not others' wealth."

[3]

नारीस्तनभरनाभीदेशं
दृष्ट्वा मा गा मोहावेशम् ।
एतन्मांसावसादिविकारं
मनसि विचिन्तय वारं वारम् ॥
(भज-गोविन्दं भज-गोविन्दं....)

Naaree Sthanabhara Nabheedesam
Dhrishtwa Maa Gaa Mohavesam
Yetan Mamsavasadi Vikaram
Manasi Vichinthaya Varam Varam
(Bhaja Govindam Bhaja Govindam......)

नारी – of maidens, स्तन भर – with the weight of their bosom, नाभीदेशं – their navel, दृष्ट्वा – having seen, मा – do not, (आ) गाः – fall a prey, मोह आवेश – the maddening delusion, एतन् – this (is), मांस – of flesh, वश – of fat, आदि – etc., विकारम् – a modification, मनसि – in (your) mind, विचिन्तय – think well, वारं – again, वारं – again.
(भज - Seek. गोविन्दं - Govindam ......)

> Seeing at the full bosom of young maidens and their navel do not, fall a prey to maddening delusion. This is but a modification of flesh and fat. Think well thus in your mind again and again.
> (Seek Govind, Seek Govind........)

In the previous stanza a true seeker is advised to give up all covetousness for the wealth of the world, and here he is advised to give up lusty passions for women. From the days of the Upanishad, to our own times, we find in all masters this constant warning against wealth *(kanchana)* and woman *(Kamini)*. No insult is meant to either. This is a statement of a scientific truth. All intelligent living creatures have these two irresistible urges, "to possess more" *(wealth)* and "to enjoy" *(woman)*.

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* "Tenatyaktena bunjeetah ma gritah kasya sviddhanam"—Isav. I-i.

All living organisms in the world move towards the one Great Harbour, seeking peace and harmony. All are always instinctively whipped up by two definite urges (a) to escape pain* and (b) to attain happiness†. It is only to end all anxieties and sense of insecurity that man runs after "wealth"; to him possessions are barricades against his enemy, "Fear." Against the beseiging troops of uncertainties in life man builds imaginary fortresses around him with money and wealth. Even a millionaire is found to be not really happy because he wants more !

When he feels relatively a little secure from fears, he feels fully the other urge more and more power —— viz. the attainment of happiness. It is under this urge that man readily falls to the irresistible enchantments of the flesh and runs after the bosom of woman.

Here the statement of man's natural attraction to woman must be understood to include woman's equally natural attraction to man. In both the cases sorrow alone is the ultimate destination where they both reach hand in hand ! !

Biologically nature has made man and woman with a natural affinity for the charms of the opposite sex. This natural urge is to be controlled, disciplined, purified and sublimated. An intelligent intellect alone can achieve this. An animal cannot; to act according to its instincts and impulses is but its privilege. The glory of man is that he can, by his rational intellect, curb and control the flow of his instincts for carnal pleasures and redivert them, thus ultimately can sublimate himself into something nobler and more divine.

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* Dukha-nivritti.

† Sukhaprapti.

Seekers in their early days of practice should find this rather difficult, since it is against the very nature of their flesh. Human body can seek its fulfilment only in the fields of sense-objects. It is the intellect that always gets visions of the higher possibilities. For the attainment of these visions, with the help of a trained mind the intellect comes to curb the passionate flow of the flesh, and thus turn the entire current of personality into the more rewarding channels of spiritual upliftment. It experiences, as time passes on, a diviner unfoldment, within. This technique of reversing the process of instinct to flow in the direction of rational contemplation is called in the *Yoga Sastra* as *Pratipaksha Bhavana.* Throughout among the scriptural texts, we meet with many advices based upon this technique.

Here Sankara gives us a line of thinking which can be an efficient antidote to the fanciful price that the body gives to the objects of the senses. The soft inviting bosom of your beloved, if scientifically analysed and mentally seen in its reality, will reveal to be composed of only abhorrent flesh and fat, packed in a scaly skin ! If these component parts are brought before your mental vision, spiritually the mind shall immediately retreat from the disgusting ugliness of it all. Through the practice of this *Pratipaksha Bhavana* we can re-educate our mind not to run away with its imagined picture of happiness in the perishable softness of the filth-filled body.

Sankara thus, with the very opening stanzas of *Bhaja Govindam* cures the student of his two most powerful fascinations—his thirst for wealth and his instinctive hunger for flesh. When these two are eliminated from a personality, it will have no more fuel to jerk it out on to the outer fields of its enchantments. This cannot come about very readily; even when it comes it cannot be maintained so easily. Millions of lives have we lived in the lower realm of evolution, and each one of us have gathered this powerful instinct of self-preservation: preservation of the individual and the race. To rise above them is an achievement in itself and for this, repeated (*Varam Varam*) practice is unavoidable. In Vivekachudamani* also we meet with the same idea.

The objects of the world exist and play their pranks upon us; but do we ever see them as they are? Each one has a knack of throwing a veil of his own fanciful imaginations to decorate the objects with his private mental likes and dislikes. Thus, we see not the world *as it is,* but gaze at a world splashed all over with our own mental contents. Through close observation, diligent enquiry, scientific analysis we can remove the unnatural colour that we have thrown upon the objects around us, and see them in their native beauty and in their natural forms.

In the gathering dusk of a dusty evening, we may misunderstand the things we perceive in front of us at a distance; but on moving nearer the objects, with an enquiring mind, we shall realise their true worth and learn to drop them as useless. Money and women in themselves are not a threat to man, but in our false imaginations we give them both a ridiculously inflated value, and striving for their sake, we come to lay waste our powers. It is this hallucination in man, and the consequent illusory fascination for the world which he entertains, that exile him from his own inner Kingdom of Joy.

[4]

नलिनीदलगतजलमतितरलं
तद्वज्जीवितमतिशयचपलम् ।
विद्धि व्याध्यभिमानग्रस्तं
लोकं शोकहतं च समस्तम् ॥
(भज-गोविन्दं भज-गोविन्दं....)

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* Dosha drshtya mukhurmuhuh......... (Vivekachudamani.)

Nalineedalagatha Jalamathitharalam
Tadwijjeevithamathisaya Chapalam
Viddhi Vyadhyabhimanagrastam Lokam
Sokahatham Cha Samastham
(Bhaja Govindam, Bhaja Govindam......)

नलिनीदलगत जलं - the water (drop) playing on a lotus petal, (is) अति - extremely, तरलं - uncertain (existence), तत् - so, जीवितं - life, अतिशय - ever (greatly), चपलं - unstable, विद्धि - understand, व्याधि अभिमान ग्रस्तं - consumed by disease and conceit, लोंकं - the world, शोक - with pangs, हतं - is (riddled) beset, च - and, - समस्तम् whole.
(भज - Seek, गोविन्द - Govind)

The water-drop playing on a lotus petal has an extremely uncertain existence; so also is life ever unstable. Understand the very world is consumed by disease and conceit, and is riddled with pangs.
(Seek Govind, Seek Govind........)

The previous two stanzas tried to help the student to make a correct judgment of the place of money and woman in a healthy man's dynamic living. They are not to serve as treacherous rocks, upon which one's ship of life should get smashed and foundered. In this stanza Acharya Sankara is helping us to realize how ephemeral, and riddled with painful imperfections, is this uncertain existence as the embodied. With all the resources that are ever at the command of a great poet, Sankara sees a human life as uncertain as a minute particle of water trembling at the tip of a lotus petal. Life is uncertain in itself, and even during its uncertain existence it is consumed by disease and conceits, persecuted by a hundred different voiceless pangs!

In the first half of the stanza, he is painting the mortality of individual existence. In the second half of the stanza he paints the pain-ridden nature of the world itself. This is a typical example of *Pratipaksha Bhavana* upon the individual and the total life.

Since life is so uncertain, and the world is in a sense nothing but sorrow, the general import of the verse is that there is no time for any one to waste. Death rarely announces his visit, and unannounced he enters cities and hamlets, flats and fields. He respects neither the person nor the place that he visits. Therefore, strive from right now. "Now" and "Here" seems to be the urgency behind the stanza. We are reminded here of Buddha's* cry on the same theme, with a very similar sense of urgency, "All is misery, misery; All is momentary, momentary."

Though I have by now indicated the beauty of the poetic-picture, in which Sankara symbolises the extreme uncertainty of life, the analogy of a drop of water trembling from the tip of a lotus petal has a deeper vedantic suggestion. This is unavoidable because poet Sankara was at once the incomparable Adwaita teacher of the world.

The lotus grows in water, exists in water, is nurtured and nourished by the waters. Ultimately it is to perish in water. Naturally the flower is nothing but an expression of the waters, sprung forth to manifestation due to the seed that was at the bottom !

Brahman the Infinite, the One without a second Itself expresses as the lotus of the subtle-body† due to Its own *Sankalpa.* Existing in the Infinite Consciousness, Divine and All-Pervading, a minute ray of It *(Atman)* functioning in and through these equipments is the Individuality *(Jiva).* Atman expressing through the lotus-of-the-intellect is the unsteady, over-agitated individual, *(Jiva)* and which, when it leaves and transcends the intellect comes back to merge with the waters of Consciousness around. Students of the Adwaita Philosophy can easily recognise in this picture an ampler suggestion than merely a poet's fulfilment in a beautiful picture.

The return of the trembling drop, back to the waters of the lake, is the culmination indicated by the *Maha Vakya,* "That Thou Art."

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* "Sarvam dukham, dukham; Sarvam kshanikam, kshanikam."

† The inner instruments of feelings and thoughts, constituted mainly of the mind-intellect equipment is called as the "Subtle-body" in Vedanta.

[5]

यावद्वित्तोपार्जनसक्त-
स्तावन्निजपरिवारो रक्तः ।
पश्चाज्जीवति जर्जरदेहे
वार्तां कोऽपि न पृच्छति गेहे ॥
(भज - गोविन्दं भज - गोविन्दं ....)

Yavadvithoparjana sakthah
Thavannijaparivaro Rakthah
Pascaajjeevathi Jarjaradehe
Vaartham Kopi Na Prichchathi Gehe
(Bhaja Govindam, Bhaja Govindam.......,)

यावत – as long as, वित्त – of wealth, उपार्जन – to earn, सक्तः – (is bent upon) has the ability, तावत – so long, निज परिवार :— your dependents, रक्तः – attached (to you), पश्चात – afterwards (later on), जीवति – lives (comes to live), जर्जर – (in) infirm, देहे – body, वार्तां – word, कोऽपि – any one, न – not, पृच्छति – cares to speak (asks), गेहे – at home. (भज – Seek, गोविन्दं – Govind............)

As long as there is the ability to earn and save so long are all your dependents attached to you. Later on when you come to live with an old, infirm body, no one at home cares to speak even a word with you ! !
(Seek Govind, Seek Govind ......)

As an animal, man is essentially selfish. He will not generally *give* without hopes of *getting*. "Nothing for nothing", seems to be the law that governs Nature. This being a universal law, ordinarily, even intimate relations and dear and near ones are deferential towards the earning-saving member of the family. This has been observed at all levels of relationship—man and wife, father and son, brother and sister. In short, in all human relationships, one who is capable of earning-and-saving alone is with due reverence respected and adored by others around, who have some hope of being benefitted by a share of his saving!

It is a popular cry that money is respect, and that money can purchase anything. And indeed this is true. But its corollary, which is generally over-looked is rather painful. For, if money is power, then a powerful man of yesterday should necessarily become, when his earning capacity is accidentally broken up, a powerless man of today! If money can purchase happiness, the absence of money can procure only sorrow!

Here the capacity to "earn-and-save" *(vithaarjana-sakthih)* should be taken in its widest scope, since 'wealth' *(Vitham)* embraces in its meaning "all things that can add to human happiness." This power to "earn-and-save" should include all powers, spiritual and secular, everywhere, at all levels in the society: the capacity of the scientist, of the politician, of a teacher, of a speaker, of a manufacturer, of an artist and so on. Human life being as it is, faculties and capacities must necessarily wane away; since age must sap all physical and intellectual efficiencies.

Keeping this fundamental in mind, Sankara says that one can be popular and the beloved of the people around him only so long as one is capable of "earning-and-saving." Then alone others can make use of, or make a prey of the "rich" one. When his capacities decay and he comes to live in his own old, infirm body, all his friends and dependants leave him as he is no more of any use to them. This is the sad way of the world.

To be forewarned is to be forearmed. Knowing this natural tendency of all comfort-loving human hearts, let the man of intelligence earn as much as he can, distribute according to his abilities and enjoy as much as it is his desert——popularity, affection, consideration and even reverence from others. But let him not misunderstand this to be the very goal of life. Let him *earn* inner peace and self-sufficiency, and let him *save* the inner-peace and tranquillity, totally independent of all the clamouring crowd around him, ever trying to fatten his vanities and to feed at all times his conceits!!

This stanza can be considered as providing for the seeker the *Pratipaksha Bhavana* against vanities of life. Through such a contemplation, curb the mind away from these false values and deceptive sense of security, and turn it towards devotion to the Higher. This can be done only "now" and "here", when one is young and one's faculties and mental efficiencies are at the prime.

No doubt, let all young men seek success in life. Let them strive, struggle and adventure forth. Let every one, earn, save, give and thus serve as many as possible around, in his community and nation. But these are to be considered only as hobbies; the main occupation of life should be the Art of self-purification, the Craftsmanship of Seeking Perfection. The real achievement is to be gained in ones own personal inner contemplation, so that even long before the world comes to reject you, you can reject the world of activities and retire into a richer world of serener contemplation and more intense self-engagements.

[६]

यावत्पवनो निवसति देहे
तावत्पृच्छति कुशलं गेहे ।
गतवति वायौ देहापाये
भार्या बिभ्यति तस्मिन्काये ॥
(भज - गोविन्दं भज - गोविन्दं...)

Yavathpavano Nivasathi Dehe
Tavatprichchathi Kusalam Gehe
Gatavati Vayow Dehapaaye
Bharya Bibhyati Tasminkaye
(Bhaja Govindam, Bhaja Govindam......)

यावत् – As long as, पवनः – the breath (life), निवसति – dwells, देहे – in (your) body, तावत् – so long, पृच्छति – enquires, कुशलं – of (your) welfare, गेहे – at home, गतवति, वायौ (सति) – when the breath (life) leaves, देह अपाये – (when) the body decays, भार्या – (even) your wife, बिभ्यति – fears, तस्मिन् – that very (in that very), काये – body.
(भज – Seek, गोविन्दं – Govind........)

> As long as there dwells breath (life) in the body so long as they enquire of your welfare at home. Once the breath (life) leaves, the body decays, and even the wife fears that very same body.
>
> (Seek Govind, Seek Govind ......)

A sense of detachment from the blind affections for the world and from the objects of hollow enjoyments is absolutely necessary in order to turn the mind towards, seeking through contemplation, the Truly Highest. In certain texts this idea is slightly overemphasized as in Buddhism, which is no doubt dangerous, inasmuch as it takes away the pep of life and dullens the very enthusiasm in the seeker to live or to strive.

Meditations on life should not land the student at the bottom of some dark pit of lifeless pessimism. At the same time he should not be blindly optimistic about the worldly achievements and the brittle vanities of life. Vedantic teachers are very very careful. While they try to dissuade man from over-indulgence in a totally extrovert life, they vehementally exhort all to live in service of man, and to develop in themselves a healthy introvertedness.

The Rishies, no doubt, with an ideal scientific detachment had observed life *as it is,* and with a relentless honesty had painted it all with shattering realism only to help the student to realize it all fully. This culminates only in a healthy optimism, and where the students' old values are shattered Vedantic teachers are very careful to substitute for him a set of healthier and more enduring values of positive living.

Western critics, not realising the implications of such stanzas, generally criticize adversely, because they jump into the conclusion that philosophers in the east paint life dark and dreary, and thus are trying to drive away from man all incentive to live and to progress.

In short, to spend one's entire life-time in sheer body-worship, in earning more, so that this futile worship may be made more elaborate, is one of the abominable intellectual stupidities into which humanity readily sinks. For, if body be the altar of worship, it may not remain permanently there as the days of decay and old age are not far away even for today's young bodies. To sweat and toil, to fight and procure, to feed and breed, to clothe and shelter the body—are all in themselves necessary, but to spend the whole life time in these alone is a criminal waste of human abilities. For, ere-long, it is to grow old, tottering, infirm, and in the end, die away.

To live in the body, for the body, is the Cult of the Rakshasas—the Virochana Cult. Virochana, the King of the Devils, even after reaching the feet of the Lord of Knowledge could understand from his instructions only this much : "the body alone is the Self, the Atman, the Eternal. To worship it is the greatest of all religions." Here, in the stanza, a line of contemplation is opened up, and to reflect in this direction is to end the attachment with the body and to blast all the futile vanities in man.

At least the animal body has *some-value* when it is dead; a human body when once dead has only a *nuisance-value*. It is to maintain and to fatten such a bundle of despicable filth that wealth is earned, hoarded, many throats cut, low dissipation practised and cruel wars waged ! ! "Even the nearest and the dearest, your own life's partner," points out Sankara, "dreads and fears the darling body of her beloved husband, when once life has ebbed away from it."

To meditate on this significant fact of life is to develop a healthy disregard for, and a profitable spirit of detachment from the body-vanities. No doubt, the body is to be looked after, for it serves us. Keep it clean and beautiful, feed it, clothe it, wash it—just as we serve all other vehicles that we make use of in the world. Serve the body—but always with a firm and steady understanding that this is *only an instrument* with which we may win the ampler fields. This will not remain for ever, nor will it serve with equal efficiency for all times. It will perish and it must.

With this right knowledge, to live in the body is the healthiest life, where minimum sorrows can be expected.

[7]

बालस्तावत्क्रीडासक्त-
स्तरुणस्तावत्तरुणीसक्तः ।
वृद्धस्तावच्चिन्तासक्तः
परसे ब्रह्मणि कोऽपि न सक्तः ।।
(भज - गोविन्दं भज - गोविन्दं....]

Balastavat Kreeda sakthah
Tharunastavat Tharuneesakthah
Vriddhastavatchinthasakthah
Parame Brahmani Kopi Na Sakthah
(Bhaja Govindam, Bhaja Govindam........)

बालः तावत् – so long as one is in his childhood, क्रीडा – (towards play) to play, आसक्तः – (one is) attached, तरुणः तावत् – a youth (so long as one is in youth), तरुणी – towards young women (towards passion) सक्तः – (one is) attached, वृद्धः तावत् – so long as one is old (an old man), चिन्ता – towards anxiety, आसक्तः – (one is) attached, परमे – to the Supreme, ब्रह्मणि – Brahman, कः अपि – any one (alas), कोंऽपिन – no one is (seen), सक्तः – attached.

(भज – Seek, गोंविन्दं – Govind........)

So long as one is in one's boyhood, one is attached to play; so long as one is in youth, one is attached to one's own young woman (passion); so long as one is in old age, one is attached to anxiety (pang)....(yet) no one, alas, to the Supreme Brahman is (ever seen) attached ! !

Seek Govind, Seek Govind........

Indeed life is short. Long is the pilgrimage. High above the clouds, veiled by them, rise the peaks of perfection that are to be scaled. And yet, the rational intellect is so powerful a mechanism that it can rocket a man of pure heart into the highest levels of incomparable divinity in a very short time, if only he is available for it. Alas ! He is not. He gets himself tied down to the passing sorceries of the flesh in the world. Deluded by his passions, he discovers an enchantment in the gold, a value in the baser things, a sweetness in the very bitter agonies of life.

Hoodwinked with lust, drunk with passions, the tottering fool wanders away from the main road into the thorny bushes, and there, lacerated and bleeding, soon fatigued, he tumbles down into the bottomless pits of death. As the teacher realizes this universal folly of man, he feels a painful desperation, and the resultant song is the verse under discussion.

Chronologically following the autobiographical story of man, Acharya says that the childhood days of man is wasted in his attachments with the toys and the games natural to that age. As he grows up, the youthful energies are dissipated in his passion for his beloved and in lusty sports. As age gathers up on him and forces him to bend upon his staff, the grey hairs on him conceal a head heavy with anxieties and fears. All through life's pilgrimage the fool crawled upon the surface, attached to one thing or the other, never getting any chance, or finding the time to attach himself to the Supreme.

Play, passion and pang. These seem to be the three common boundaries in every thoughtless man's life. No one born can struggle against the flow of time or against the law of growth. The days of ball and doll must yield their chances to the times of passion and woman, and then at the evening of life, he arrives to live his worries and anxieties regarding himself and others depending upon him. Strange enough——never did he get any leisure to surrender to Him, who is the Sole Protector of All, the All-giving Guardian at all times.

This extreme sense of attachment to the world is to be given up intelligently, so that life may have a goal, a mission, or at least a purpose. This extrovertedness is natural to all living creatures. But in man this is inexcusable. The other creatures live as commissioned by their instincts. Man has the freedom to rationally judge even his own inclinations, temperaments and tendencies, and reject them, when they are found to be foolish and dangerous. It is in this special aspect that man is "the roof and crown of things". If well employed, he can raise himself to the highest perfections.

Around us in the world we find man is never idle, but is ever active. Play-pen and play-fields, love-arbours and romance-world, hospital-beds and infirmaries——these, the usual fields of his achievements and industrious activities ! All the time, life constantly ebbs away and there is no time for him to think of Him, the Supreme ! Kathopanishad indicates that the very Creator had made man's sense-organs turned outward, and so he lives generally at the sense-level, and can feel a sense of fulfilment only in sense-indulgences. "It is only some rare ones," says the glorious Kataka Rishi, "who, desiring to realize the Highest, withdraw themselves from the preoccupations of the senses and seek the Changeless and the Immutable."

To be attached to the Lord is to learn to withdraw from the usual fields of pain-ridden sorrows——the ephemeral gains, and the shocking losses. To turn to God is to attach ourselves to Him and by this attachment any sincere seeker can bring about an efficient detachment from the ever-changing realms of objects.

[8]

का ते कान्ता कस्ते पुत्रः
संसारोऽयमतीव विचित्रः ।
कस्य त्वं कः कुत आयात-
स्तत्त्वं चिन्तय तदिह भ्रातः ॥
(भज-गोविन्दं भज-गोविन्दं...)

Kaa Te Kaantaa Kaste Puthrah
Samsaroyamateeva Vichitrah
Kasya Twam Kah Kutha Aayaatah
Tatwam Chinthaya Tadiha Bhratah
(Bhaja Govindam, Bhaja Govindam.......)

का – who is, ते – your, कान्ता – wife ? कः – who is, ते – your, पुत्रः – son, संसारः अयं – this samsara, अतीव – supremely, विचित्रः – (indeed) wonderful, कस्य – of whom, त्वम् – are you ? कः (त्वम्) – who are you? कुतः – from where (त्वं – you), आयातः – have come ? नत विं (तः वं) – of that Truth, चिन्तय – think, तद् इहः – that here a lone, भ्रातः – Oh Brother.

(भज – Seek, गोविन्दं – Govind........)

> Who is your wife ? Who is your son ? Supremely wonderful indeed is this Samsar. Of whom are you ? From where have you come ? Oh, brother, think of that Truth here.
>
> (Seek Govind, Seek Govind.......)

There is no denying the fact that the institution of home, the bonds of family relations etc., have all a beneficial influence on individuals, and they can certainly liberate man from his ego-centric selfishness. And yet, they are themselves even at their best very limited. They can never be an end in themselves. Man and woman living together, in mutual love and respect, as a couple, and growing to the dignified status of a father and a mother, have much to learn from each other.

Both get well trained by their mutual association, if they live in a true spirit of togetherness. But ordinarily in their folly, they grow into such an unhealthy state of attachment to each other that the very balm becomes a poison. According to the Hindu Sastras, man and woman in wedlock must live, no doubt, in a spirit of *togetherness,* but the Acharyas insist, "let there be space between the two"——let there be no clinging attachment to each other, which is unhealthy for both.

Family is the field of trial and test, wherein the individuals can grow into healthier personalities——but it is not in itself the final destination. Live life with detachment at home. It is but life's college. Mistake it not as life's main field of achievement.

If all philosophical declarations cannot be practically lived, philosophy itself becomes an utopian idealism, preached by a poetic visionary and, therefore, must fail to influence life or culture. To live in attachment and to sink into the family mire seems to be natural for man and woman. Mind takes to it as readily as the duck to water. Therefore, the philosophy must prescribe a technique by which one can grow into the required state of detachment. That technique is here described.

Intelligent enquiry is the only antidote for the follies of delusion. The method of enquiry to be adopted is being indicated here. Acharya Sankara asks us to enquire *Who is your wife? Who is your son?!!* On analysis we shall find that the beloved wife was a simple daughter of her father, until in marriage you were tied to her. Life being so uncertain, nobody can foresee who is to part first, and in case it is your lot to precede her in death, there again she will be living as a widow. Thus, in life man and woman are born independently, and each one must die and depart alone. In the pilgrimage from birth to death, in the travel from life to death, at a certain junction each met with the other, and thereafter travelled together, no doubt, serving each other——as all good-hearted travellers always do. The companionship parts when the destination is reached. By thus analysing one shall realise the right attitude one should have in maintaining a healthy relationship with the world.

So too is the son. When you analyse your real relationship you shall see that the son has become yours only after his birth. Before that it was a foetus. Before that it was only a seed in your loins, and that itself came from the food you assimilated. The food came from the earth. Thus a "clod-of-earth" in its various manifestations became the fruit, the food, the seed, the foetus and the child, and, therefore, the child itself is nothing but an effect of the ultimate cause, the mud. If you analyse yourself as the father, you too are nothing but the product of a "clod of mud" of another period of time and place. One piece of mud then gets attached to another piece of mud! How strange! How powerful is delusion———Maya!

The empirical life, the *Samsara,* is a fascination only to the thoughtless. Intelligently mediate upon them. Enquire "to whom do I belong? To what Factor Divine does my very existence owe its continuance? From where have we all come to play this passing-show in the field of this world? Where are we going? When once departed from here what is our destination?"

If there be thus a source from which we have come and a destination to which we are going, what exactly should then be our duty "now" and "here"? What should be our attitude to things and beings, and the infinite happenings, that crowd around us and march through our existence "here"?

Oh! Brother (*Brathah*). Please contemplate! Sankara is assuming now not the status of a teacher advising the taught, but he talks as an elder brother would to an erring younger brother. However, it is to be noted that there are several other readings. Instead of 'brother' (*Brathah*) there is a reading which means 'Mad-one' (*Brhanthah*). This is also quite appropriate, in the context of the stanza, because a mad-man is one who is not acting as he should. The deluded fool in his extreme attachment to things of the world outside, when he lives, expressing an incapacity to think rightly and act properly is also a mad-one in life.

[9]

सत्सङ्गत्वे निस्सङ्गत्वं
निस्सङ्गत्वे निर्मोहत्वम् ।
निर्मोहत्वे निश्चलतत्वं
निश्चलतत्वे जीवन्मुक्तिः ॥
(भज - गोविन्दं भज - गोविन्दं....)

Satsangatwe Nissangatwam
Nissangatwe Nirmohatwam
Nirmohatwe Nischalatatwam
Nischalatatwe Jeevanmukthih
(Bhaja Govindam, Bhaja Govindam ....)

सत् संगत्वे – Through the company of the good, निः संगत्वं – (there arises) non–attachment, निः सगत्वे – Through non-attachment, निः मोहत्वं – (there arises) freedom from delusion, निर्माहत्वे – Through the freedom from delusion, निश्चल – Immutable, तत्वं – Reality, निश्चल तत्वे – through the Immutable Reality, जीवन् मुक्तिः – (comes) the state of "liberated-in-life."

(भज – Seek, गोविन्दं – Govind........)

> Through the company of the good, there arises non-attachment; through non-attachment there arises freedom from delusion; when there is freedom from delusion, there is the Immutable Reality; on experiencing Immutable Reality there comes the state of "liberated-in-life."
>
> (Seek Govind, Seek Govind..........)

From all that has been said so far it is very clear that to live in the world, earning-and-saving, is not in itself a real profit. To live in attachment is, certainly, an ill-rewarding programme of existence. To waste our life in the lusts and passions of our flesh is dissipating ourselves in all our faculties. Through *Pratipaksha Bhavana,* we must try to withdraw from them all and spend the energy so conserved, in seeking and serving Govind.

It is easy to appreciate the logic of this philosophy, but not always so easy to appreciate its cannons; and, indeed, it is almost impossible all of a sudden to live its recommended way-of-life. This difficulty is experienced by all students of philosophy, everywhere, at all times. All true philosophers must appreciate this logical difficulty in the student, and provide for him various practical methods by which the poor seeker, in his frail spiritual strength at this moment, may be helped to walk the "path".

Else philosophy itself would become an impractical utopia. Acharya Sankara talks directly to his devotees, at all times. His is not the style of the Rishi declarations, wherein the inspired Seer, closing his eyes, roared and thundered in panting words of his Infinite Joy of the Impossible which he has rendered possible. These frightening commandments, gushing down from the soft-flowing hearts of the peaceful Masters, constitute the Upanishads. Sankara, the commentator serving as a missionary in the country, with a definite goal of cultural revival to be achieved, never seems to forget the quality and calibre of his listeners' intellect.

In the stanza under review, Sankara gives a simple "ladder-of-progress", by carefully climbing which a seeker can comfortably arrive at the highest reaches of perfection.

Inspite of our appreciation of the rationale in the philosophy so far discussed, the fact still is that we are living every hour of our existence amidst temptations of life, where wealth and woman are the main enchantments. Artificially, I can build up an intellectual barrier against my passions and lusts. And thus I may restrain them from their onward flow for some time. But the objects of fascination are so numerous and their enchantments so powerful, that the mighty sorcery of the sensuous-world is too irresistible for an individual seeker to fight against.

In order to reinforce the efforts of a student in his early days of seeking, and to give him more courage and strength, Sankara advises him to have plenty of the "company of the good" *(Satsangh)*. As a result of the practice of *'Pratipaksha Bhavana'* the student is, no doubt, holding the company of good-thoughts within himself. This is to protect him from the rising waves of passions within. But in order to fight against the hordes of temptations in the every-day-world, he needs a fortress around him, which is drawn from his association with the good people.*

The "company" that we keep is very important. The worldly seekers are carelessly choosing their friends, and are indiscriminate in choosing their associations. The chances are that he, inspite of his knowledge and determination, will be snatched away, in bad company by the powerful waves of blind passions. To be in the "company of the good" is to be with those who are devotees of the Lord and are themselves seekers of the Highest. In such an assembly there is a power-created, which in the congregation erects a powerful fortress, against the magic of the world outside.

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* "Company of the good"—directly with living teachers, learned pundits cultured men, and sincere seekers; if these are not available then indirectly, through great Books.

As a result of the influence of the "good company", the human mind develops steadily a capacity to withdraw from the sensuous fields of attraction, and thus discovers in itself the secret of detachment (*Nissangatwam*). When the sense of attachment is sponged away from the inner bosom, delusion *(Moha)* and all the delusory false values that we give to the world can no more remain. It is always the mind that puts a value upon the objects, and thereafter, the inert objects of the world become capable of enchanting that mind.

When once the mind has started seeing the things *as they are*——because the mind has redeemed itself from its own *Vasana* encrustations——the Immutable Reality is glimpsed by that mind. When this experience becomes more and more established in us that individual becomes a God-realized Saint, "liberated-in-life" *(Jivanmukta)*. The stanza reminds us of "the-ladder-of-fall" that Geeta describes*.

Glancing over the contents of these two stanzas it is evidently clear that Geeta is showing the "ladder of the downward fall" while Sankara is showing the "ladder of the upward climb". There is yet another reading of the stanza where instead of "Immutable Reality" *(Nischalatwam)* we have "steadfastness" *(Nischalitatwam)*. When the delusion of the mind is wiped away, mind gains a "steadfastness" in meditation, and with this steadfast meditation, the experience of the Highest and the consequent state of "liberation-in-life" *(Jivanmukti)* is easily attained.

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* When a man thinks of objects, attachment for them arises; from attachment desire is born; from desire arises anger. From anger comes delusion; from delusion loss of memory; from loss of memory the destruction of discrimination; from destruction of discrimination he perishes."—Geeta II, 62 & 63.

[10]

वयसि गते कः कामविकारः
शुष्के नीरे कः कासारः ।
क्षीणे वित्ते कः परिवारो
ज्ञाते तत्त्वे कः संसारः ॥
(भज गोविन्दं, भज गोविन्दं....)

Vayasi Gate Kah Kamavikarah
Sushke Neere Kah Kaasaarah
Ksheene Vithe Kah Parivaro
Gnyate Tatwe Kah Samsarah
(Bhaja Govindam, Bhaja Govindam ......)

वयसि गते (सति) – when the age (youthfulness) has passed, कः – where is, कामविकारः – lust and its play, शुष्के नीरे (सति) – when water is evaporated (dried up). कः – where is, कासारः – the lake ? क्षीणो वित्ते (सति) – when the wealth is reduced, कः – where is, परिवारः – the retinue ? ज्ञाते तत्त्वे (सति) – when the Truth is realised, कः – where is, संसारः – the Samsar.

(भज – Seek, गोविन्द – Govind........)

When the age (youthfulness) has passed where is lust and its play ? When water is evaporated, where is the lake ? When the wealth is reduced, where are the retinue ? When the Truth is realized, where is Samsar ?

(Seek Govind, Seek Govind.........)

In four epigrammatic statements, Sankara drives home to the student's understanding that where the cause has ended, the effects cannot continue. When age and its youthfulness have passed away, where is lust and its play? The maddening lust of blindening passion can remain with one only so long as the skin is tight, the muscles are hard, the blood is stormy and the individual is young and hearty. Lust springs only from youthfulness. When the cause is removed, the effects cannot remain all by themselves.

When the waters are dried up, the lake can no longer continue to exist. The dried up lake or tank can only express as the bed; only when waters are there that they can express themselves as lake or tank, and serve the world as such. So long as the waters of desire are playing in the mind, the passionate youth vigorously strives to fulfil them. But when once these desires have dried up how can the man of action strive to acquire and court?

When the wealth is reduced, where are the relations, dependants, supporters—in short, ones entire retinue? They follow behind an individual only so long as he can look after them, and they can profit by him. When the capacity in the individual has ended, the retinue also disappears. And wealth is an uncertain possession. Nobody can say when and how she courts an individual, or when she will without regret, shamelessly push him into penury and starvation, and depart in another direction, towards another individual !

With these three examples, it is clear that when the cause is absent, the effect is also absent. Carrying this anology into the subjective realms of spiritual perfection, Sankara asks the question, "when the Truth is realised, where is *Samsar ?*"

The ignorance of the post gives us the delusory vision of the ghost and the consequent fears. At the non-apprehension of the Reality, misapprehensions start and they provide the hosts of sorrows for the deluded. Due to the *Vasana*-fumes, called "ignorance" *(Avidya),* the Perfection is not experienced, and therefore, man, revolting against his own sense of imperfections, desires, plans, works and strives to acquire and possess the outer world, whereby he hopes that he can seek a fuller fulfilment in life.

Through the processes explained in the previous stanza when the *Vasanas* have been eliminated, meaning, when the "ignorance" of the Reality is ended, all the misconceptions also must end. The delusory sense of individuality, arising from the myth of the mind and its dream-objects, constitutes the "painful sufferer" amidst the finite objects.

When once the *Vasanas* have ended, the cause has been eliminated, and naturally, therefore, the effects cannot exist by themselves. When the Truth is realised, where is the empirical phenomenon of finite objects and their unlimited tyrannies ?

Here in then is the cause for our conditionings in our inner life, which in its turn created the chaos of an ego and its meaningless achievements and mad roamings of the individuality. When this inner *Vasana*-condition has been changed, the ego has been eliminated, and where there is no ego, the world "perceived, felt, and thought of" must necessarily recede into nothingness. As the phenomenal play of enchantments gets obliterated, the experience of the Infinite Consciousness comes to reveal as the State of Truth, and at this experience the individuality ends and the Universal Consciousness becomes the very nature of the meditator.

"The Knower of the Brahman becomes Brahman"*, and for this there is no other path† other than that which was discussed in the previous stanza.

[11]

मा कुरु धनजनयौवनगर्वं
हरति निमेषात्कालः सर्वम् ।
मायामयमिदमखिलं बुध्वा
ब्रह्मपदं त्वं प्रविश विदित्वा ॥
(भज-गोविन्दं भज गोविन्दं....)

Maa Kuru Dhanajanayowvanagarvam
Harati Nimeshatkalah Sarwam
Maayamayamidamakhilam Budhwa
Brahmapadam Twam Pravisa Vidittwa
(Bhaja Govindam, Bhaja Govindam.........)

मा – Do not, कुरु – take, धन – in possession, जन – in the people, यौवन – in youth, गर्व – pride, हरति – loots away (takes away), निमेषात् –

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* Brahmavit Brahmaiva Bhavati
† Naanya Panthah vidhyate ayanaya.

in a moment, कालः – the Time, सर्वं – all these, मायामयं – full of illusory nature, इदं – this, अखिलं – all, बुध्वा – after knowing, ब्रह्मपदं – the state of Brahman, त्वं – you, प्रविश – enter into, विदित्वा – after realising.

(भज – Seek, गोविन्दं – Govind........)

> Take no pride in your possession, in the people (at your command), in the youthfulness (that you have). Time loots away all these in a moment. Leaving aside all these, after knowing their illusory nature, realise the State of Brahman, and enter into it.
>
> (Seek Govind, Seek Govind ......)

False vanities and hollow conceits ties man to the wheel of woe in life——*Samsar.* The empirical process of change and the consequent jurks affect man only when he keeps the relationship of himself with the world of objects, feelings and thoughts, through his body, mind and intellect. By this he creates a false attitude to things and beings around him, as "*my* people", "*my* things", "*my* joys", "*my* ideas" etc. These false vanities throw man out of himself to suffer the storms of finitude and the floods of change. All these are really the unavoidable contents of the objective-world.

Wealth, social connections and family status, youth and its vigour——these form the tottering pillars upon which is built the platform of sense-enjoyment. This drama of passion and lust can end only in utter dissipation and personality-exhaustion. These have been already discussed and clearly shown in the earlier verses.

Wealth is never constant. Nor can it ever remain faithful——she must move from hand to hand, visiting all; youth can never last for long. Relationships in this world, the social status, popularity and power——all these are indicated by the term people *(Jana).* All of them entirely depend upon the fancy of the moment, the mood of the hour. This world of illusory appearances is a field of preoccupation only to the delusory ego, which springs from one's own identification with the perceiver-feeler-thinker in oneself. Seek the knower of it all, the Principle that illumines all experiences——*Sakshi Chaitanya*——in the very core of ones own bosom. Realise that this Consciousness *(Ayam Atma)* presiding over all our inner experiences is the Consciousness Infinite everywhere (*Brahman*).

[12]

दिनयामिन्यौ सायं प्रातः
शिशिरवसन्तौ पुनरायातः ।
कालः क्रीडति गच्छत्यायु-
स्तदपि न मुञ्चत्याशावायुः ॥
(भज - गोविन्दं भज - गोविन्दं....)

Dhinayaminyow Saayam Praatah
Sisiravasantow Punaraayaatah
Kaalah Kreedati Gachathyayuh
Tadapi Na Munchathyaasaavaayuh
(Bhaja Govindam, Bhaja Govindam ....)

दिन यामिन्यौ – Day and night, **सायं** – dusk, **प्रातः** – dawn, **शिशिर वसन्तो** – winter and spring, **पुनः** again, **आयातः** – come (and depart); **कालः** – Time, **क्रीडति** – sports, **गच्छति** – ebbs away (goes away), **वायुः** – life (breath), **तत् अपि** – And yet, **न** – not, **मुञ्चति** – leaves, **आशा वायुः** – the gust of desire.

(**भज** – Seek, **गोविन्दं** – Govind........)

> Day and night, dusk and dawn, winter and spring again and again come (and depart). Time sports and life ebbs away. And yet, one leaves not the gusts of desires.
>
> (Seek Govind, Seek Govind .....)

The day decays to end itself in the night. The night dies only to blossom forth into the following day. The dawn grows in vigour and heat to be the noon, but soon wanes away to be the mellow dusk. On the wheel of happenings, the months steadily glide along and in its soft-footed silent march, the irresistable floods of time roll up in waves of years, sweeping every thing in front of its relentless might. Hushed in the silence of its own wonderment, the Age slips unperceived into its slushy grave.

Time moves on. That which was future becomes the present, and itself rolls away to join the endless ocean of the past. Time never stops, on no condition, for no person! It is ever on the march! Man, gathering *memories* from his own 'past' barricades his 'present', sets them ablaze with his *excitements* in his day-to-day life, and the rising fumes of his bosom blurs his vision to make his life rugged with his *anxieties* for the 'future'. As we thus waste ourselves with our endless manoeuvres, in the irresistible stride of Time, all our hopes and plans get defeated and routed.

The young courageous heart of the spiritual child Nachiketas realises this ridiculous *tamasha,* when he consoles his old father Vachasravas, by reminding him that* "things born must die and perish away only to be born again"——nothing is permanent.

Later the same spiritual hero talking face to face with his teacher, Lord Death, at Death's own portico, with utter disdain rejected the gifts that Yama offered him, and there again we hear the same truth expressed in the vigorous words† of the child "even the longest life that you can give is but a trifle; may you keep to yourself the dance and the music."

Life is at Time's mercy .... In not recognising this man desires to enjoy the sense-objects, strives, sweats and toils endlessly to acquire, to possess and to aggrandise—to hope, to spend .... And death snatches away every thing from him .... He is compelled to leave every thing here—and with painful bundles of *Vasanas,* acquired in his desire-ridden selfish life, the miserable creature departs. How sad! Indeed, how tragic!

The objects glitter with an illusory beauty and sing their dissipation-songs only because they are rendered so enchanting by our own mind——just as the objects of flaming joys in our dreams! This dazzling glow of joy in them conceals the Highest Reality. "A golden disc covers the brilliant face of Truth", declares Isavasya Upanishad*, and therefore, the Upanishad student therein could not realise what the teacher declared†. "Every thing that is here present is clothed by *Isa.*" Sensuous passions alone make man blind to his own true State of Perfection.

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* Sasyamiva marthya pachate, sasyamivaajayatae punah—Katho. I. i.
† Apih sarvam jivitam alpameva tavaivavaha tava nrithya geetae—Katho (I. i)

Desire for the fleeting, delusory, golden-deer is for the time being, seemingly more powerful for Sita than her infinite love for Rama, her Divine Beloved. This is delusion at play—Maya with a vengeance.

Life steadily ebbs away, but desire fed by the sense-gratifications only grows the more by them. Body decays and becomes infirm. It has grown to have no more strength to enjoy, but the man hungers all the more for sense-enjoyments. Death crawls behind. Disease and decay accompany him. Piloted by worries and anxieties, this mournful procession reaches the edge of the grave.....still man wants the joys of the pain-ridden objects.

Be wise. Give up desires. Seek the All satisfying Reality, that lies behind the mental show of change and sorrow. The Infinite alone will satisfy you. Seek it with a mind withdrawn from the fever of all passions.

[13]

का ते कान्ता धनगतचिन्ता
वातुल किं तव नास्ति नियन्ता ।
त्रिजगति सज्जनसंगतिरेका
भवति भवार्णवतरणे नौका ॥
(भज-गोविन्दं भज-गोविन्दं ....)

Kaa Te Kaantaa Dhanagatachintaa
Vaatula Kim Tava Nasti Niyantaa
Trijagati Sajjanasamgatirekaa
Bhavati Bhavaarnavatarane Nowkaa
(Bhaja Govindam, Bhaja Govindam........)

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* Hiranmayena patrena Sathyasya apahitham mukham.
† Isavasyam idam sarvam yat kincha jagatyam-jagat.

का – Where is, ते – your, कान्ता – wife? (का – where) धनगत – pertaining to wealth, चिन्ता – worry? वातुल – Oh, distracted one! । किं – is there, तव – to you, न अस्ति – not, नियन्ता – the ordainer of rules (one who ordains or commands?), त्रिजगति – in the three worlds, सज्जन – of the good, संगति – association (सज्जन संगति – the association-with the good), एका – alone, भवति – becomes (can serve as), भव आर्णव तरणे – to cross the sea of change (birth and death), नौका – the boat.

(भज – Seek, गोविन्दं – Govind………)

> Oh, distracted one! Why worry about wife, wealth etc.? Is there not for you the One who ordains (rules, commands)? In the three worlds it is the "association-with-the-good-people" alone that can serve as a boat to cross the sea of change (birth and death).
>
> (Seek Govind, Seek Govind……..)

"Why worry about wife or wealth?" There is yet another reading:* "Why dissipate mentally over the lips of your lady?" To worry over anything will not pay in life. To worry means to waste our mental energies and when once the mind is stormed with sensuous thoughts regarding any problem, the impoverished mind has no more any vitality left over in it, with which it may face effectively its challenge. Worry exhausts; it saps out all the fluid-dynamism that the personality has, with which alone it can confidentally face the battle of life. Man fails, not because the world is strong enough to break him down, but it is always only because man becomes weaker and thus relatively the world-of-happenings is rendered more powerful. Remember, "the weak must perish", is the law of nature.

To dissipate oneself in the sensuous thoughts, as indicated in the stanza, is indeed unholy, and to do so upon one's own partner-in-life is, indeed, a self-insulting criminal-meanness. Wife is something more than a mere sensuous convenience. To consider her as only a chattel for your pleasure, and for your sense-gratification, is to pull down the institution of home and the sanctity of the motherhood in her. Such degrading, demeaning devolutionary thought-currents, when they arise in the bosom of the seeker, they should be curtailed and he must uplift his thoughts by conscious remembrance of the Lord. The entire stanza is addressed to the sensuous man, and the Acharya here calls him, "best among fools that constantly waste themselves in lascivious thoughts". *(Vatula).*

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* Kanthaa-adhara-gata-chintaa.

But having fallen into this wrong rut of thinking, and having cultivated the habit of emptying one's personality-vitality through such mental kink, what is now the remedy for coming out of this self-ruining habit. Constant and continuous "association with the good people", who are themselves well educated, self-controlled, men with vision and a mission, is the only known remedy. In the beginning, by such a continuous association, the mind will slowly take up new channels of thinking and ultimately will come to forget the old habits of thought. This alone can be the only remedy.

This "contact" will develop in us a healthy attitude towards things, which, in their turn, will give a new purpose and direction for our thought-life. When the quality and the texture of thoughts have changed for the better, the seeker shall discover in himself a new inspiration welling within, pushing him on to greater effort in more rewarding fields. This new lease of life in the fresh atmosphere of healthy thoughts will encourage him day by day to strive for the Higher and will give him a clearer picture of the Goal of life. He develops a pair of mental antennae, extremely sensitive to feel his path, the means of achieving his own goal: a radar effect.

Physical self-control *(Dama)* brings about mental peace *(Sama),* which creates a satisfying inner joy *(Santosh)* of the spiritual heart. With such an inner instrument alone sincere self-study *(Swadhyaya)* and reflection *(Vichar)* can be undertaken with assurance of creditable profit. In fact, therefore, the earliest preparations to enter into this walk of life is "contact with the good (*Sajjana-sangathi*)". This "association with the good" is not only helpful in the elementary stages of spiritual seeking, but it is beneficial at all the seeker's subsequent stages of self-development and growth within.

"Good association (*Sat-sangh*) with the spiritual teachers and co-students" will help us throughout our pilgrimage. Therefore, *Sajjanasangathi* is metaphorically used here as the "boat (*Nauka*) to cross the ocean-of-limitation" (*Bhavarnava*). A boat is not only useful just while leaving one shore, but until we land safely at our destination, all through out the journey, the boat is that which keeps us afloat on the sea. As each wave lashes on it, the boat absorbs the direct shocks and imparts to the traveller only a little tossing, perhaps. Atop the crest of the wave, on the ascending-slop of the waves, at all places, all through the passage, the boat keeps us dry, safe and relatively comfortable.

"Constant association with the wise", becomes thus a protective armour on the inner-equipments, which are the only armaments with which a seeker has to contend alone with the dire enemies of his own false-values and acquired-habits of sensuous living.

This is the twelfth stanza, with which the bouquet of 12-Verse-flowers (*Dwadasa-Manjarika-Stotra*) concludes. These are the twelve-stanzas directly given by Acharya Sankara, although, in truth, we cannot say it with any amount of finality, since we find in various publications, the stanzas are interchanged. In some publications we find the bunch of these dozen-stanzas are concluded with a stanza describing the author and the circumstances under which this poem came to be composed.*

The following fourteen-verses together forms the companion bouquet of "14-Verse Flowers" called *Chatur-dasasa-Manjarika-Stotra*. Each one of them is traditionally

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* "Dwadasa-manjarikabhir-asea Kathito vaiyakaranayaisha upadeso-abhud-vidyanipunaih srimad-sankare-bhagawad-charanaih."

Minimum work + Maximum. [illegible]
The [illegible] [illegible].

found to have been attributed to the fourteen followers of Sankara who had accompanied him on that day in Benaras.

[14]

जटिलो मुण्डी लुञ्छितकेशः
काषायाम्बरबहुकृतवेषः ।
पश्यन्नपि च न पश्यति मूढो
ह्युदरनिमित्तं बहुकृतवेषः ॥
(भज – गोविन्दं भज – गोविन्दं ....)

Jatilo Mundee Lunchithakesah
Kaashaayaambara bahukritaveshah
Pasyannapi Cha Na Pasyati Moodo-
Hi-udaranimitam Bahukritaveshah
(Bhaja Govindam, Bhaja Govindam.......)

जटिलः – One ascetic with matted locks, मुण्डी – one with shavenhead, लुञ्छित केशः – one with hairs pulled out one by one, काषाय अंबर बहुकृत वेषः – one parading with ochre – robes, पश्यन् अपि च – though seeing, नः – never, पश्यति – sees, मूढः – a fool, हि – indeed, उदर निमित्तं – for belly's sake ; बहु कृत वेषः – these different disguises or apparels.

(भज – Seek, गोविन्दं – Govind........)

> One ascetic with matted-locks, one with shaven-head, one with hairs pulled out one by one, another parading in his ochre-robes———these are fools who, though seeing, do not see. Indeed these different disguises or apparels are only for their belly's sake.
>
> (Seek Govind, Seek Govind.......)

We are told that Cain, the second son of the only father at that time, Adam, started murder and destruction of life on the surface of the created world. When the world was first created, according to the Christian mythology, the art of killing was inaugurated by Cain, because Cain never wanted to work.

With minimum work he wanted food, so he found that with least effort, he can have plenty to fill his belly, if he stood behind the rocks and treacherously killed any animal, and ate it ! Minimum labour and maximum comfort is the dangerous philosophy of selfishness that started the destruction-civilization. Wherever there is this philosophy man must sink into immoral, unethical, uncultured, barbarous ways.

As children and grand children of this great first father, this human instinct, to be idle has remained true to the type, and is seen even now in our own times. At all levels of society, and at all departments of activity, idlers and shams are plenty in all periods of history. Sankara's era also was no exception to it; and even *Mahatmas* and *Sannayasins* were not totally above this law. There must have been, in the Acharya's own times, if not as many as they are available now, at least a few, who must have wandered into *Sannyas* as escapists from life, seeking and finding a happier life, in bluffing the generation and playing upon the credulity of the people.

Such aborations of personality are to be pitied than to be condemned. But, whenever they appear at important strategic points in society, as politicians, as governors or as priests, they are more dangerous to the society than when they appear and play out their life in a limited field of their own private life, be it at home or even in society. With them we have no choice but to suffer them as nobly as we do the great natural calamities as floods or blizards or volcanic eruptions ! !

Thus, the author of this verse looks around and sees to his own utter amazement that cheats and self-deceivers are often wearing the very uniform of the highest vocation in life, *Sannyas*. Some of the samples of these cheats are being just hinted at in this stanza : "one with matted-locks, one with shaven-head, another one has laboriously plucked his hairs one by one, another in spectacularly coloured ochre-clothes."

They are not conscious of the goal, to reach which they have taken the robe, nor are they striving in the right direction. May be, every one of them takes to the sacred-cloth with real intentions and sure purposes, but alas, en-route, as time passes on, they come to forget the very purpose for which they have made the sacrifice of their domestic life and their duties in the society as an individual citizen. These different disguises serve them not for their philosophical seeking of Truth but only serve them for filling their belly.

If this was true at the time of Sankara, today when more bellys are more often empty, it is the logic of life that more people should take to different types of disguises for the sake of satisfying their own hunger.

Thus guided by the self-preservation instinct and the lust for power and wealth, there are such false people in every walk of life even today—false leaders, false policemen, false artists and false preachers—untruthful men, feining, by their external dress and behaviours, to be what they are not actually by themselves. Falsehood, indeed, is as much a brilliant human capacity, as honesty is one of man's heroic perfections.

Deception by matted-locks, ochre-robes, etc., is universal and belongs to all times: the wolf in the tiger-skin is nothing new, but in other walks of life, such deceptions are not so dangerous as in the path of spirituality. We have them everywhere, in all creeds, political, economic, scientific and even spiritual. The classical example is the sensuous king of Lanka approaching the hermitage of Rama, with the basest of intentions of running away with Sita, dressed as he was at that time in the robes of a *Sannyasi.*

Even such fraudulant persons, when they adorn the sacred garment, must be conscious of the glory of *Sannyas,* at least at moments when the large number of the faithful Hindus prostrate at his sacred feet ! Again, he is constantly reading about It. He has, of necessity, to talk about the glory of the Goal. Thus, intellectually, he must be "knowing" what is the noblest way-of-life, *("he sees")* and yet, it seems, he fails to live up to it ("*yet he sees not*").

Then why has he left home, cultivated his matted-locks, or shaven off his head etc. ? All we can say is that such low, despicable, insignificant, worms among mankind are a threat to the society, and in their incapacity to earn and live well by serving the community, they have taken to this well-paying profession of deception ! It is merely "for the belly's sake," *(Udara-nimittam).* To the unguarded mind, the whispers of the lower passions become suddenly more urgent than the call of the higher aspirations. Desire for enjoyment makes man slip from his own high values-of-life and his disciplines in it*.

This stanza is traditionally attributed to Padmapada the famous disciple of Shri Sankara.

[15]

अङ्गं गलितं पलितं मुण्डं
दशनविहीनं जातं तुण्डम् ।
वृद्धो याति गृहीत्वा दण्डं
तदपि न मुञ्चत्याशापिण्डम् ॥
(भज – गोविन्दं भज – गोविन्दं …….)

Angam Galitam Palitam Mundam
Dasanaviheenam Jaatam Tundam
Vridho Yaati Griheetwa Dandam
Tadapi Na Munjatyaasaapindam
(Bhaja Govindam, Bhaja Govindam ……,)

अङ्गं – The body, गलितं – (has been) worn out, पलितं – has turned grey, मुण्डम् – the hair (the head), दशनविहीनं – toothless, जातं – has become, तुण्डम् – the mouth, वृद्धः – the old man, याति – moves (goes) about, गृहीत्वा – having taken (leaning on), दण्डं – (his) staff, तदपि – even then, न – never, मुञ्चति – leaves, आशा पिण्डम् – the bundle of desires. (भज – Seek, गोविन्दं – Govindam ……)

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* Bhagawad Geeta II-60 : "The turbulent senses, son of Kunti, do violently snatch away the mind of even a wise man, striving after perfection."

> The body has become worn out. The head has turned grey. The mouth has become toothless. The old man moves about leaning on his staff. Even then he leaves not the bundle of his desires.
>
> (Seek Govind, Seek Govind ......)

That the power of desire to enjoy the sense-objects is irresistable and unending, is indicated in this stanza. The individual, if he is young, hale and hearty, brimming with energy, then the sense-passions are but natural, and if not entirely inexcusable, at least to an extent it is understandable. We can very well appreciate how the world preys upon him.

But this is not all. The author paints so beautifully, with a very few artistic strokes of his pen, the picture of a dilapidated, physical form tottering with age ! In a body worn out, hair grown grey, and mouth turned toothless, the old man moves on, leaning on his own stick. Theoretically it may be assumed that he has exhausted all passions, and feels no more any hunger or thirsty for flesh and pleasure ; but it is, very rarely so !! The bundle of his desires even then leaves him not. On the other hand, it persecutes him all the more because the mind thirsts, the intellect plans, and alas, the body cannot execute ! It is like the sorrows of one suffering jail-life, where he remembers his home, the sweet joys in the gurgling laughter of his dashing children at home ; and yet, he cannot reach them, because physically this has been rendered impossible.

Suffering thus the greater tyrannies of inexpressible desires that ever storm him within, the old man lives an agonising life of unimaginable sorrows.

By the statement, the author indicates, that the only way to peace is to control desires, even while we are young, so that it becomes a habit. Thus, at least when the youthfulness has departed, the matured old man can come to live peacefully his time of retirement in tranquility and inner joy.

Desires grow in the mind as the body grows old, and the dissipated body becomes more decrepit. The capacity for enjoyment leaves the body, but the mind, which has developed habits of immorality, cruelly persecutes the emaciated body.

In this stanza the picture of a young man growing old is beautifully screened. The sequence of the lines in the stanza is the very sequence in which age appears in man. First, the body becomes old ; then the grey hair appear ; then the teeth start falling off and at last the back bone has no more the strength to hold the body erect, and he takes the help of a stick to keep himself erect. Leaning on his staff, painfully he drags himself on tottering legs——a sad and pitiable sight indeed.

And yet, man cannot get rid of his heavy load of desires ! They seem to multiply as the body moves nearer the grave. This is *Maya,* this is *Moha.*

The stanza is attributed to Shri Totakacharya.

[16]

अग्रे वह्निः पृष्ठे भानू
रात्रौ चुबुकसमर्पितजानुः ।
करतलभिक्षस्तरुतलवास-
स्तदपि न मुञ्चत्याशापाशः ॥
(भज – गोविन्दं भज – गोविन्दं ....)

Agre Vanhih Prishte Bhanu
Rathrow Chubukasamarpitajaanuh
Karatalabhikshastarutalavaasah
Tadapi Na Munjatyaasaapaasah
(Bhaja Govindam, Bhaja Govindam........)

अग्र – In front, वह्निः – the fire, पृष्ठे – at the back, भानू – the sun, रात्रौ – at night, चुबुक समार्पित जानुः – with (his) knees held to (his) chin, (He sits), करतल भिक्षः – alms in (his own) scooped palm (he receives), तरुतल वासः – under the shelter of the tree (He lives), तदपि – and yet, न – never, मुञ्चति – spares (leaves), आशा पाशः – the rope of desires.

(भज – Seek, गोविन्दं – Govind......)

In front the fire, at the back the sun, late at night he sits with his knees held to his chin; he receives alms in his own scooped-palm and lives under the shelter of some tree and yet, the ropes of desires spare him not ! !

(Seek Govind, Seek Govind......)

In the previous stanza a house-holder suffering the persecutions of his own desires was painted exhaustively and it was held up to the ridicule of all thinking persons. Is then the wandering-monk in any way exempt from such subjective self-persecutions ? The tyrannies of desire are universal. It is a law of nature. As all scientific laws it is also universal, and it respects no personality. The reactions of desires spare none.

To bring home this idea, the picture of a true ascetic is brought out here. One may be having none of the elaborate comforts of life, and having renounced everything, including even the minimum necessities of life, may come to live with no clothing, no shelter and with scarcely any food. Even such an individual, who, to fight the inclemencies of weather may resort to warming himself up, on cloudy wintry days, near the fire. And in the clear and bright day-time he may bask himself in the warmth of the sun.* When at night the fire goes out he may bend himself upon himself, and with his chin held tight to his own knees, he may spend the rest of the time of the cold night. He may not keep to himself any possession——not even a begging bowl. He may accept what is given unto him in his own palm. For shelter he may choose to be under any wayside tree.

Thus, an individual may come to leave even the utter necessities of life and, for all practical purposes, may look a real man of renunciation, and yet, says the author of the verse, we find "the chords of desire never leave him." *(Tadapi-namunjati asa-pasah)*.

While indicating thus a fact in life, all the pseudo-sannyasins are contemptuously laughed at, in this verse. Mere asceticism, however impressive it may be, will not be sufficient in itself. Renouncing the objects of the world, is

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* Hence the stanza says "fire in front" and "sun at the back."

[illegible] make charity.

not real renunciation. To give up our desires for them is the real sacrifice, and to dry up this desire we must distill our personality off its contents of craving. No doubt, self-denial at the level of the senses is the means, but the goal is the total elimination of even the very thirst to enjoy. Sankara in *Atma Bodha* very vividly describes that the spiritual student should give up, "all his clinging attachments to the joys arising from the outer objects".*

Self-denial even when it is real cannot produce true results unless it is accompanied by a high mental purity. The stories, in the *Puranas,* of Rakshasas doing tapas, are examples to illustrate this point. Out of all their tapas the Rakshasas ultimately got only their self-destruction, brought upon themselves by their own indulgence.

Geetacharya calls such people, who so ostensibly practise asceticism but are in fact mentally spending themselves in sensuous self-dissipation, as hypocrites.† Physical self-denial, it is now clear alone in itself will not do. There must be elimination of desires from the mind without which all asceticism is a mental self-persecution. Through asceticism the vitalities that would otherwise have been spent in indulgence can be conserved. But without re-directing it for creative self-application, self-denial becomes a ruinous self-suppression. Reapplying the energy, so discovered in ourselves as a result of our self-denial, in the path of positive development and spiritual unfoldment, is called *Sublimation* of our instincts. Suppression is unprofitable. There is no profit greater than sublimation.

This stanza is attributed to Shri Hastamalaka.

[17]

कुरुते गङ्गासागरगमनं
व्रतपरिपालनमथवा दानम् ।
ज्ञानविहीनः सर्वमतेन
मुक्तिं न भजति जन्मशतेन ॥
(भज - गोविन्दं भज - गोविन्दं ....)

opinion is changeable but religion is not changeable

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* Baahya-anithya-sukha-askthim-hitwa—Atma Bodham-51.

† "Mithyachaara sa uchyate" Geeta III-6.

Kurute Gangaasaagaragamanam
Vrataparipaalanamathavaa Daanam
Gyaanaviheenah Sarvamatena
Muktim Na Bhajati Janamasatena
(Bhaja Govindam, Bhaja Govindam.......)

कुरुते - Goes to pilgrimage, गङ्गा सागर गमनं – to where the Ganges meets the ocean, व्रत परिपालन – observes the vows, अथवा – or, दानम् (कुरुते) – distributes gifts away, ज्ञान विहीनः – devoid of experience of Truth, सर्व मतेन – according to all schools of thought, मुक्ति – release, न – not, भजति – (he) gains, जन्म शतेन – even in hundred lifes.

(भज – Seek, गोविन्दं – Govind ....)

One may in pilgrimage go to where Ganges meets the ocean, called the Gangasagar, or observe vows, or distribute gifts away in charity. If he is devoid of first-hand-experience-of-Truth *(Gnanam)*, according to all schools of thought, he gains no release, even in hundred lives.

(Seek Govind, Seek Govind......)

When Hastamalaka has thus mentioned and criticized the futility of unintelligent tapas by recluses, Sri Subodha contributes in this stanza an extension of the very same idea as contained in the previous stanza. What about *Tapas* in the life of devoted householders? Seekers of the true end of religion do go for pilgrimages, observe vows, and offer charities. All of them are wonderful exercises for developing healthy attitudes to life and in helping one on to the path of study and contemplation. But ordinarily, householders confuse these means as an end in themselves. This erroneous concept is being laughed at by the poet.*

Without knowledge of the Infinite Reality, liberation from our sense of finitude is impossible.† In the Upanishads also we find often this idea that freedom from the thraldom of life can never be gained unless one comes to experience the Infinite Oneness of Life.‡ Here walking the path of the ancient teachers, Sri Subodha says that it is the unanimous conclusion, arrived at by all schools of thought in Vedanta, that liberation from the sorrows of life cannot be gained, without the actual first-hand experience of the One Infinitude. The Acharya is sure, and he asserts with emphasis that by mere practice of these noble exercises, one cannot reach one's destination "even in hundreds of lifes" —(*Janma-Satena*)

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* Sri Subodha.

† Atmabodh : Bodho-anya-sadhanobyohi sakshaat mokshaika sadhanam Pakasya Vahnni-vat Egynanam vina moksho na sidhyati.

In the text the phrase "*Gangasagar*" can mean the place where Ganges meets the Bay of Bengal, called in India as "*Gangasagar.*" It can also mean Ganga and Sagar : meaning, pilgrimages to Kasi, where Ganga flows, and to Rameswar where bath in the sagar, Sethu, is the most important item. Pilgrimages to Kasi and Rameswar will bring a lot of vivid experiences for a person who is doing it with faith, dedication, devotion, and sincerity, specially when it is undertaken on foot, as they used to do in the past.

Educating the Intellect to hold higher ideals, training the mind to obey the will, sharpening one's will itself, and training it to be easily wielded by oneself, are the achievements gained by the practice of vows. Through firm determination and individual will, when one orders that one's sense-organs will not have, for a fixed period of time, some of the things which they always liked the most—there we have all the contents of a "vow". And when it is undertaken in a spirit of dedication unto the Lord, and the entire mind is turned towards the Lord, it becomes a very efficient psychological training in recasting the mind—and it becomes a "Religious-vow."

However beautifully and elaborately one may cook his food, until that food becomes one with himself, the sorrows of hunger cannot end. Pilgrimages, vows and charity* are all exercises to prepare the seekers mind for the great path of meditation. Through meditation until the Highest is actually apprehended *(Gyanam)*, total freedom *(Mukti)* from the natural human weaknesses can never be gained ——not even in hundred lifes *(Janma Satena)*. The old teachers in Vedanta used to tell us, "the snake-on-the-rope seen by your foolishness cannot disappear by *Garuda manthra;*" "nor can" they used to add, "the ghosts you have projected on the post, run away by ringing the bell."

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‡ Gnahe-Nevatu Kaivalyam.

* Sharing intelligently what you have with others around you, who are in need of it is charity.

Waking up alone is the remedy for all the sorrows of the dream. Wake up Oh, Limited Ego and come to apprehend your own Infinite Nature, wherein there is neither Matter not Spirit. "That Thou Art."†

This stanza is believed to have been written by Sri Subodha.

[18]

सुरमन्दिरतरुमूलनिवासः
शय्या भूतलमजिनं वासः।
सर्वपरिग्रहभोगत्यागः
कस्यसुखं न करोति विरागः ॥
(भज – गोविन्दं भज – गोविन्दं.......)

Suramandiratarumoolanivaasah
Saiyaa Bhootalamajinam Vaasah
Sarvaparigraha Bhogatyaagah
Kasya Sukham Na Karoti Viraagah
(Bhaja Govindam, Bhaja Govindam........)

सुर मंदर तरु मूल निवासः – dwelling (sheltering) in temples, under some trees, शय्या – bed (sleeping), भूतल – on the bare sand, अजिनं – (wearing) skin (deer's), वासः – cloth, सर्व परिग्रहः – of the possession, भोगः – of thirst to enjoy, त्यागः – renouncing, कस्य – (whose), सुख – happiness, न – not, करोति – brings, विरागः – dispassion.
(भज – Seek, गोविन्दं – Govind......)

Sheltering in temples, under some tree, sleeping on the bare sand, wearing a deer-skin, and thus renouncing all idea-of-possession and thirst-to-enjoy, to whom will not dispassion *(vairagya)* bring happiness ?

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† "Tat-Twam-Asi"—One of the Mahavakyas found in Chandogya Upanishad.

(Seek Govind, Seek Govind.......)

Earlier,* a hypocrite was painted by Sri Hasthamalaka and now, in this stanza a real renouncer, who has truly relinquished all his inner thirsts for enjoying the world outside, is being pictured by Sri Sureswaracharya. True dispassion brings real happiness to all. In the world outside, we find even emperors sorrowing, the rich worrying, the powerful man anxious, the man of accomplishment jealous......all are unhappy.

Everyone points out to the other man, who, according to him, is happier. But the only one, who has the courage to declare and truly feel that he is happy, is he who has relinquished all his passions and hungers from within. One cried out : "I am Cæsar's Cæsar", another thundered forth, "I am a Shah-in-Shah". He alone is really rich who has no more any use for the finite joys of this ephemeral world of delusory pleasures.

Such an individual may have no shelter of his own more than the shade of a tree in the courtyard of a temple. He may sleep there under it on the naked ground. He may wear nothing but a deer skin. Renouncing thus the entire idea of possession, and relinquishing all attempts to seek one's fulfilment in life through objects of the world, he lives happily——ever self-sufficient unto himself. He is independent of the world outside. He has discovered an inexhaustible well of joy and a rich mine of true satisfaction in his own deep within. "Who will not be happy in this mental mood", asks Sureswaracharya in this verse.

When renunciation is only external and when there is still the sense-of-attachment within, one cannot discover the true joy of living. This has been already said. It may be then suspected that there is no joy whatsoever to reward renunciation and *tapas*. This is not true; to assess so would be positively against all our scriptural declarations.

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* Ibid : 16

Here is painted the outer behaviour and the inner attitudes to life in a true relinquisher (*Viraktha*). He has reached the stage of desirelessness, not as a result of his deliberate running away from life, but due to a positive experience of intense self-sufficiency felt and lived within. It has been beautifully described in the picture of "the Man of Steady Wisdom" in the Geeta.*

The inner riches must be the basis of the outer poverty, or else renunciation is, indeed, painful. The healthy *outlook* on life must be nurtured by an enduring *in-look* which the student must cultivate. Without insight into the Reality the outer man can never dare to give up the enchanting things of the outer world of beauty.

Simple and unostentatious becomes the way-of-life of a true Master. The Emperor of Emperors in him lives on the luxurious roughness under some nameless tree, shading the courtyard of any way-side temple.† Generally, in a temple ground, late in the night, nobody wanders about, and so, under a tree there he is all alone, enjoying perfect solitude.

And the sleep is comfortable, not because of the softness of the bed, but because of the purity of the Man's heart. A true man of seeking being innocent has no mental worry and so, in his positive life of peaceful love to all, he sleeps comfortably on the rough ground, luxuriously cushioned by his own sense of purity and his hearts' essential goodness.

Who will then be not happy ?

All others are unhappy, indeed. They may have a lot of possession, but their mind has the cancer of desire and their intellect has the carbuncle of conceits. The same idea is being described in the Upanishads also, "by renunciation alone, Immortality can be achieved."*

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* When a man completely casts away, Oh Partha, all the desires of the mind, satisfied in the Self, and by the Self, then he is considered to be a man of steady wisdom (Geeta II, 55).

† Even in the temple-verandah your presence may create jealousies in the mind of the Trustees !

Again, in another Upanishad the Teacher† after discussing the glory of renunciation comes to the conclusion, "renunciation alone is the seat of fearlessness."

[19]

योगरतो वा भोगरतो वा
सङ्गरतो वा सङ्गविहीनः ।
यस्य ब्रह्मणि रमते चित्तं
नन्दति नन्दति नन्दत्येव ॥
(भज – गोविन्दं भज – गोविन्दं ....)

Yogarato Vaa Bhogarato Vaa
Sangarato Vaa Sanggaviheenah
Yasya Brahmani Ramate Chitham
Nandati Nandati Nandatyeva
(Bhaja Govindam, Bhaja Govindam.........)

योगरतः – (Let) one who revels in Yoga, वा – or, भोगरतः – (Let) one who revels in Bhoga, वा – or, सङ्गरतः – (Let) one seek enjoyment in company, वा – or, सङ्गविहीनः – (Let) one who revels in solitude away from the crowd, यस्य – for whom, ब्रह्मणि – in Brahman, रमते – revels (sports), चित्तं – the mind, नन्दति – (he) enjoys, नन्दति – (he) enjoys, नन्दत्येव – only he enjoys.

(भज – Seek, गोविन्दं – Govind ......)

Let one revel in *Yoga* or let him revel in *Bhoga.* Let one seek enjoyment in company or let him revel in solitude away from the crowd. He whose mind revels in Brahman, he enjoys......... verily, he alone enjoys.

(Seek Govind, Seek Govind........)

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* "Tyagena-ekena Amritatwam Anasu"-Mundakopanishad says: "By renunciation alone, Immortality is gained."

† "Vairagya meva abhayam".........."Dispassion alone is the shelter from fear."

This is a verse glorifying the State of Realization of Brahman as conceived by the Scriptures of the Hindus. To one, who has awakened to this Great Truth it is immaterial thereafter whether he is in crowd, or living all alone, in *bhoga* or in *yoga*. In whatever condition he may live, his is the real joy.

Mind at rest is the Temple of Joy. So long as it is gurgling with its desires, passions and attachments, in its stormy surface, the signature of joy gets ruffled out.* To one who has realized the Highest in himself, and has thereby recognised the non-existence of the multiple-world of names and forms, and who has also realized the Infinite Bliss in the sense of Oneness, his indeed is the true joy. This joy is true because it is not dependent upon things and beings, nor upon the arrangement of things around the individual.

To a man of realization, after his experience of the Infinite, there is nothing more real to him than the Brahman. And, therefore, let him remain practising self-control, if he so chooses *(Yoga)*, or let him live in seeming indulgence at the sense-levels (*Bhoga*); let him be in the company of the world, serving the world by joining himself at the head of the parade, or let him remain burying himself in lonely contemplation in the silence of some Himalayan cave—his alone is the true joy of the within. He no more seeks, from the outer world, any joy from his sense gratification.

There are very many texts where it is said that even the Vedas dare not prescribe rules *(Vidhi-nisheda)* to regulate a Perfect man's behaviour. He has all freedom: he can do anything. In explaining this absolute freedom allowed to the Man of Perfection, *Panchadasi* goes so far as to say: "Killing parents, destroying embryo, these sins even cannot destroy either the liberation achieved, by the saint or the joyous glow on his face."†

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* "Asnatasya kutah Sukham ?"—Geeta II-66.

† Matapitror-vadha stheyam Bhrunahatya-anyadrisam.
No Muktim Nasayet Papam Mukha-Kantir Na Nasyathi—Panchadasi.

This is not to be understood as a licentiousness which the Brahmin has allowed himself through his Vedas. It is something very like the special powers we allow some great men in all walks of life even in our modern world : the Supreme Court Judge can finally decide whether a murderer is to be hung or not; or the President of India is given the power to pardon the condemned and reduce his punishment to a life-imprisonment. When these powers and the freedom to use them are allowed it is relegated not to everybody, but only to those members of the community in whom the civilized world has perfect faith that they will be ever just, good, and noble.

A full-fledged doctor alone is given the freedom to use his knife on the body of another living member of the society, and the patient may even die bleeding from the wound which the doctor had created. That which would have been a murder in any other member of the society, in the doctor it is considered as an "essential service" ! !

Similarly, the Man of Perfection is one who will not and cannot act selfishly, nor has he any need to court his fulfilment of life in the objects of the world outside, and so this freedom is given to him.

The father gives the key of his cash box to his son—only when he has grown up sufficiently. If the key is given in childhood or early youth the boy having not realized the sanctity of wealth, and allowed, understood the difficulties of earning, may misuse the freedom so and harm himself. Only when he has grown to a sense of responsibility and has some experience of the difficulties of life does he know the right use of money. Also, it is a fact that the father gives readily the key of his cash box to the son only when the Dad is confident that what the son earns and puts in there will be more than what he will be taking out of it ! !

By his very nature a Man-of-Perfection is incapable of acting against the moral harmony and the ethical goodness in society. "Having realised the Self he has become the

Self in all".* The Upanishad Rishis from their own experience assure us that a realized Saint thereafter lives "sporting with the Self, revelling with the Self and ever in the service of the world."†

Such a Man-of-Perfection alone enjoys in this world ——of sorrows and tribulations, of contentious competitions, and endless imperfections, of disease and death—the spotless joy of the Perfect. "He alone enjoys, truly enjoys, verily he alone enjoys," cries Sri Nityananda to whom this stanza is generally attributed.

[20]

ow of Cattle

भगवद्गीता किञ्चिदधीता
गङ्गाजललवकणिका पीता ।
सकृदपि येन मुरारिसमर्चा
क्रियते तस्य यमेन न चर्चा ।
(भज गोविन्दं, भज गोविन्दं ....)

intellect but
emotional.
Phisical

Bhagavadgeeta Kinchidadheetaa
Gangaajalalavakanikaa Peetaa
Sakridapi Yena Murarisamarchaa
Kriyate Tasya Yamena Na Charcha
(Bhaja Govindam, Bhaja Govindam..........)

भगवत् गीता – The Bhagavad Geeta, **किञ्चित्** – (even) a little, **अधीता** – has studied, **गङ्गा जल लव कणिका** – a drop of Ganges water, **पीता** – has sipped, **सकृत अपि** – at least once, **येन** – by whom, **मुरारि समर्चा** – worship of the Lord Murari, (**मुरस्य अरिः** –The enemy of Mura, a Rakshasa), **क्रियते** – is done, **तस्य** – to him, **यमेन** – with Yama, the Lord of Death, **न** – never, **चर्चा** – quarrel (discussion).

(**भज** – Seek **गोविन्दं** – Govind ......)

To one who has studied the Bhagavad Geeta even a little, who has sipped at least a drop of Ganges-water, who has worshipped at least once Lord Murari, to him there is no discussion (quarrel) with Yama, the Lord of Death.

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* "Brahmavith Brahmaiva Bhavathi."
† "Athma-Krida Athma-Rathi Kriyavan"—Mundakopanishad.

(Seek Govind, Seek Govind..........)

Three divine exercises for spiritual unfoldment are being indicated here : (1) the study of the Geeta, (2) the Ganga-baptism, and (3) the worship of Murari. Sreemad Bhagavad Geeta, being the essence of all the Upanishads, a study of its eighteen chapters is an intellectual discipline, by which we can come to understand what exactly is the secret Essence of Life, what exactly is the Goal of life, and what are the methods by which this Goal can be gained.

The heavenly Ganges *(Akasa Ganga)* flowing so high above the human intellectual approach, was brought down to man's level of experience by the continuous efforts of King Bhageeratha, and today it is emerging out from the pure intellect of Lord Siva, who alone could stand the onslaught of Her devastating wisdom-descent. The Eternal Tapasvin, the Lord of Kailas, realized this great Knowledge Absolute *(Gyanam)* first, and, thereafter, at the request of Bhageeratha, He gave out that Knowledge, in a thin stream, which could perennially water the country's "heart" rather than rape the land down with its irresistible deluge.

Thus Ganga stands for the "spiritual knowledge" for the Hindu——the Eternal River of the Knowledge of the Self, that has been kept up till today, flowing from teacher to the taught, in an unbroken perennial stream. To sip a drop of this "spiritual flow" *(Ganga)* is to enjoy the serenity and fullness of the Inner Kingdom.

Ordinarily, the modern child of this country, due to the power of tradition and faith, takes Ganga to mean the Himalayan river, and like the multitudes, they too have come to give a special potency to Her elemental waters. In their scientific outlook this is a faith and there is no convincing meaning. Naturally, they believe, and yet they believe not.

Some positively decry this belief...."what is there sacred in a river ?" asks some ! What a colossal ignorance of the symbolism ? What is there in your national flag as such, except three coloured pieces stitched together with a wheel-figure in the centre ? The sanctity of my country's flag is not in the material contents or the form of it, but in its significance that I have given to it. So too Mother Ganga is sacred, for, she signifies the "Spiritual Wisdom" and the flow of it along the teacher-taught unbroken stream.

To the ordinary folk, this eternal river and the worshipping it.....the ritualism itself is a great consolation, a wondrous achievement, a consoling action, a purifying religious pilgrimage. But to the seeker of the Highest Knowledge, who walks the *Path of Knowledge* more than the idol, the ideal interpreted in the idol is important. Thus, here, in the context of the stanza, the statement, *"who has sipped at least a drop of the Ganges water"*, should mean "those who have at least had a glimpse of the Infinitude and the higher possibility of the divine way-of-living".

If the study of the Geeta gives an intellectual and objective picture of the goal and the path to the scholarly student, a few drops of the Ganges sipped from the hollow of his palm, gives to the ardent devotee the flicker of a joyous vision of the distant goal. To him the harbour is no more too far away, because he has seen the flashes from the Light House ! And yet, he is still in the open sea of life, buffeted by the stormy waves of sorrows around him. But he has hopes; he is now confident. The Harbour is not far, and he makes a dash towards it.

When a ship enters the harbour, it is not allowed to sail and enter in as she likes, but a pilot-ship must go out and pilot the guest-ship in. The ship that seeks shelter of the harbour must have the patience to stand out, constantly sending *radio-messages* to the harbour tower. A seeker who has thus become assured of the Harbour at hand must thereafter call out for help *(Kirtan)*, wait till the "pilot-ship" arrives *(Guru)*, and implicitly follow the foams left by the guiding ship. This "piloting in" is accomplished in spirituality "by the worship of Murari". The "weighing the anchor" is meditation.

Until the ego (*Mura*) is annihilated there is no hope of entering the Harbour of Truth, the glorious State of Immaculate Peace. The body-consciousness and the ego-sense, arising out of a false identification with matter, can be rubbed off only by devoted worship and prayer, at the altar of the very Destroyer of Ego (*Murari*).

Withdrawing the mind from all other preoccupations, and surcharging it constantly with the memory of the goal, the Nature of the Self, is the only method by which intellectual and mental limitations are battered down, when the individual realises that the life within is the Life everywhere present .... and in fact, in the supreme logic of the Sreemad Bhagavad Geeta this is fully endorsed.*

A seeker who has accomplished all these three—study of the *Sastra,* glimpsing the goal, and striving to reach it—to him there is no more any fear of death. He is no more questioned by Lord Death, nor does the seeker care any longer to question about the phenomena of death. It is interesting to note that in Hinduism, Lord Death is called as the Great Controller, *Yama.* But for the principle of Death, so efficiently working all around, existence would have been impossible; nor can creation ever take place. For, to create is to annihilate the present condition of a thing, and thereby making it into a new form and presenting it in a new condition. Thus viewed, the very creation is a continuous process of annihilation.

The question of change can arise only in the realm of death. Change is experienced through the vehicles of the body, mind and intellect. When a seeker through the processes of *Yoga* has transcended these three vehicles, he rises above the realm of change, a realm where Infinite Existence alone is.* There neither is he to question or to fear death, nor can the Principle of Change (death) can ever enter to question him! There is an alternative reading, "not even death dares to question him."† This stanza is traditionally believed to have been given out by Sri Anandagiri.

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* Refer Geeta Swamiji's Discourses on II-52-53.

[21]

पुनरपि जननं पुनरपि मरणं
पुनरपि जननीजठरे शयनम् ।
इह संसारे बहुदुस्तारे
कृपयाऽपारे पाहि मुरारे ॥
(भज - गोविन्दं भज - गोविन्दं........)

Punarapi Jananam Punarapi Maranam
Punarapi Jananeejatare Sayanam
Yiha Samsare Bahudustaare
Kripayaa(a)paare Paahi Muraare
(Bhaja Govindam, Bhaja Govindam.....)

पुनः अपि – once again, जननं – birth, पुनः अपि – once again, मरणं – death, पुनरपि – (and) again, जननी जठरे – in the mother's womb, शयनम् – lying, इह – here, संसारे – in this Samsara (process), बहु दुस्तारे – (Samsara) which is very hard to cross over, अपारे – Samsara which has no end, कृपया – through The Infinite Kindness, पाहि – save, मुरारे – Oh! the Destroyer of Mura.

(भज – Seek, गोविन्द –Govind ......)

Again birth, again death and again lying in mother's womb——this Samsar process is very hard to cross over........Save me, Murare (Oh! Destroyer of Mura) through Thy Infinite Kindness.

(Seek Govind, Seek Govind..........)

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* "Ajo nithya saswathoyam puranah, Na hanyate hanyamane sareere" Geeta II-20.
"Nithya sarvatgata sthanuh achaloyam sanatanah." II-24.

† "Kurute tasya yamo api na charcha."..........(Text).

The wheel of birth-and-death is never at rest, for the Jiva. The individualised ego prompted by desires,—entertained by his imagination and cultivated by his habits, but not yet completely fulfilled,—must seek ever fresh fields of experiences repeatedly. In each life-time instead of exhausting the existing desires (*Vasanas*) each one gathers to himself a new set of *Vasanas.* We come here for a purgation—but due to our ignorance of the way and the goal, the extrovertedness in us compels us to get ourselves attached to the objects, which have a beauty and a charm created by the imaginations of our own minds! Maya at work!

We come with our own *Vasanas** into "*Vasanas* playing criss-cross", which is the world of objects and beings, the actual field of man's endeavour. To live up to the *Sahaja Vasanas* and to exhaust them through actions, undertaken without ego and ego-centric desires *(aham-mamah)*, so that no new *Vasanas* may precipitate in us, is really the "way". By all means, act and achieve, but let your actions be in an attitude of dedication (*Mai Sannyasya*), with an idea to serve *(Lokasamgrah)*, in a spirit of Yagna *(Yagna-Bhav)*, says the Geeta.

Thus, when the existing *Vasanas* are reduced, the thought-disturbances calm down, and thus, when the subtle-body, (mind and intellect) dies a "mystic-death", meaning, is transcended, the experience is of the Infinite Spirit.

Thereafter since there are no *Vasanas* in the individual, there are no thoughts in him, and so no subtle-body to claim a new embodiment to function in any fresh environment. The causes for all repeated births thus totally cease.

Birth is painful—Death, of course, is excruciatingly so—Again, to come to life in the horrid cell of the womb, there to be crushed, twisted, imprisoned and persecuted by the physical and mental strains and jerks of the mother, is indeed abhorrent, terrible, cruel. And yet, as we are today, we are seemingly helpless.

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* "Sahaja Vasana" of the Geeta XVIII.

The momentum gathered by this great fall from Perfection is too powerful to be halted all by ourselves. The ego, born out of me, has now become a mighty power ruling over me relentlessly, and in front of this usurper of my bosom, I am but a slave. To free myself from this great inner tyrant I need now a mighty friend, a powerful and sympathetic friend. And who can It be ?

"Oh, the Destroyer of Mura, Lord Krishna, save me... help me, please" is the ardent prayer unto Him, and seeking His Feet of Love is the only way out.

"And even here what right have I, the slave of my own passions, the non-believer all these years, to seek His help now ?

"True, I have no faith to meet Thee, Oh Lord. I have nothing to offer Thee except my own tears. I have nothing to claim for myself except the fatigue of my indulgence, the stink of my selfish acts, the sweat of my passions, the chords of my attachments. In fact, I don't deserve to be saved. Yet, Lord, I am tired——beaten out completely, exhausted thoroughly———repentant fully—helpless, wholly———."

"I surrender myself to Thee and Thy Grace. I claim a hearing and expect help from Thee. Are not Thou the Ocean of *Kripa*——of Grace, of Kindness, and of Love ? Are Thou not the Destroyer of the demon Mura ? Won't Thou, in Thy kindness, take pity on me and once more destroy the old enemy, Mura, in my bosom———the bundle of my own wretched *Vasanas ?*"

Thus, to surrender unto Him and to sincerely invoke His grace is to create in us divine and godly *Vasanas,* which are the only antidote to the ego and the ego-centric *Vasanas* that constantly clamour in our bosom for gratification. Once these are hushed, the Song of the Flute-Bearer shall be heard; the Bluelight of His aura can be seen; the Fragrance of His garland of wild-flowers can be smelt; the Butter in His hand can be tasted; the embrace of the Infinite can be experienced !

[22]

रथ्याचर्पटविरचितकन्थः
पुण्यापुण्यविवर्जितपन्थः
योगी योगनियोजितचित्तो
रमते बालोन्मत्तवदेव ॥
(भज - गोविन्दं भज - गोविन्दं ....)

Rathyaacharpata Virachitakanthah
Punyaapunyavivarjitapanthah
Yogee Yoganiyojitachitho
Ramate Baalonmattavadeva
(Bhaja Govindam, Bhaja Govindam.........)

रथ्या चर्पट विरचित कन्थः – He who wears the *godadi* (shawl made up of pieces of cloth rejected by others on the road), **रथ्या** – the road, **चर्पट** – pieces of old cloth, **विरचित** – made of, **कन्थः** – godadi (a shawl), (**पुण्य अपुण्य** – merit and demerit, **वि + वर्जित** – well left, **पन्थ** – the path). **पुण्य अपुण्य विवर्जित पन्थः** – who walks the path that is beyond merit and demerit, **योगी** – the Yogin (sage), **योगी नियोजित चित्तः** – whose mind is joined in perfect Yoga, **रमते** – sports (lives thereafter), **बालवत् एव** – as a child, (or), **उन्मत्तवत् एव** – as a mad man
(**भज** – Seek, **गोविन्दं** – Govind... ...)

The Yogin who wears but a *godadi** who walks the path that is beyond merit and demerit, whose mind is joined in perfect *Yoga* with its goal, he revels (in God-consciousness)——and lives thereafter——as a child or as a madman.

(Seek Govind, Seek Govind.........)

A man of realization after achieving the goal and realizing the liquidation of his individuality and therefore, of his personal proprietorship over his body, it is described in our sacred books that he thereafter lives on as a child (*balavath*), as a mad-man (*unmathavath*) or as a ghost (*pisachavath*). These examples are given to express one or the other aspect of his mental attitudes to the world outside. He is not a child or a mad-man or a ghost—and yet, he is *like* them. He has in him some qualities of these and so he is *like* a child, *like* a mad-man, or *like* a ghost.

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* A shawl made up of pieces of cloth rejected by others, picked up from the streets and stitched together is called the Godadi.

Love and hatred we find even in children. They express all emotions as and when they arise in their innocent minds. But the very next moment they have forgotten all about those feelings. Children are always found to be fully engrossed with their immediate mental mood. They have no capacity to drag the past into the present and colour the present happenings with the dead past. There is perfect spontaneity both in children and in the Perfect Seer.

A Man of Perfection also lives from moment to moment, and lives fully and entirely in the chaste present. He carrys no regrets from the past, nor has he any anxiety for the future——Right *here* and *now,* like the children ever do, the Man-of-realisation lives and revel ("*balavath*").

A mad man moving amidst us——His mind is full of his own thoughts, and the ordinary folks have no entry into the thought-world of the demented man. So too the Man-of-perfection, moves amongst us, and his inner experiences are too deep and strange for us to guage and understand. He lives amidst us. Often he conforms to the discipline of our social actions. But even though his feet are amidst us in our own world, his head is held ever above the clouds of likes and dislikes, ego and its vanities, joys and sorrows (*unmathavath*).

He revels in the peaceful state, the *Samya Avastha,* in the Great Equipoise. He, in his inner life, walks the path which is beyond both merit and demerit, good and bad, pleasure and pain. These opposites are experienced only when the empirical world it projected by the mind. Merit and demerit cannot affect the Perfect. And not even the Vedas prescribe or prohibit the actions of such *Mahapurushas.* The Upanishad exclaims: "For one who is moving above the three gunas, where is prescription, where is prohibition ?"

Fearlessly he moves. Alone, in lonely jungles and in quiet places, by day and by night——fearlessly he moves about. Others are afraid of him in due reverence——(*pisachavath*). The ghost is afraid of none: all fear it.

Such a Man-of-perfection, his mind totally plucked away from its usual fields of passion and lust, when it has reached a perfect Yoga with the Goal, it has reached its God-realisation. When such an individual transcends, his mind and intellect treads the surface of the globe, he is no more a slave to his body, and so his body dare not demand anything for itself. However, the Perfect-man allows his body a minimum of protection and this is indicated by the "*godadi*".

In society everyone has got duties; and duties go hand in hand with rights. If you are to enjoy the privileges in a nation, as a citizen under its constitution, you have also definite duties towards the community, in which you are living. The lesser the privileges, of course, lesser the duties.

It is also very well-known that a dead man has neither any duty nor has he any privilege among the living. After the "mystic death" of the individual concept, the Ego, the Master no more has any "rights" to demand, but out of his infinite love for the mankind, he cannot but take upon himself all "duties". Thus, a true sage in India, according to our Scriptures, serves the society day in and day out, without relaxation, with as much sincerity and diligence as a selfish man would work for his own personal gains in the world's various departments of activity.

And yet, a sage takes from the world only a minimum, the bearest need. This is indicated by the very traditional uniform of the Rishis in India. They lived in the jungles. And fed themselves upon wild fruits, roots and leaves. They sheltered themselves under the trees, preferably very near the burial ground! They kept for themselves for their use only a shell called the *Kamandalu*. This attitude of taking from life the least, but giving back to life the most, is that which earned for the Mahatmas of this country the respect and reverence that we even today show for them.

All these ideas are indicated when Sankara describes here that this God-man moves in the world, covering himself with only a *godadi*. This is called as a "patch-work-quilt" and it is a shawl made out of all sorts of available cloth-pieces, picked up by him from the way-side, as and when he came across them, and stitched them together at random to serve him as a multi-coloured, many-designed shawl of variety-textures ! ! The idea being that since he has nothing more to gain from the world, he does not want to increase the competition of the world by demanding his rights even for the so-called utter necessities of life.

What a contrast ! To-day the best ones among us strive under a philosophy of "minimum effort and maximum gain", while the fathers of our culture lived in our land with the healthy philosophy of "maximum effort and minimum gains to themselves". The difference between these two philosophies are like night and day; and the joyous life in a cultured society should necessarily be poles far removed from the sorrows of a barbarous, uncultured, immoral society.

This stanza is traditionally attributed to Sri Nityananda.

[23]

कस्त्वं कोऽहं कुत आयातः
का मे जननी को मे तातः ।
इति परिभावय सर्वमसारं
विश्वं त्यक्त्वा स्वप्नविचारम् ॥
(भज – गोविन्दं भज – गोविन्दं........)

Kastwam Koham Kuta Aayaatah
Kaa Me Jananee Ko Me Taatah
Iti Paribhavaya Sarvamasaaram
Viswam Tyaktwaa Swaapnavichaaram
(Bhaja Govindam, Bhaja Govindam.........)

क: – who, त्वम् – (are) you, क: – who, अहम् – am I, कृत – from where, आयात: – did I come, क: – who (is), मे – my, जननी – mother; क: – who (is), मे – my, तात: – father, इति – thus, परिभावय – enquire, सर्वं – all, असारं – essenceless, विश्वं – the entire world of experience, त्यक्त्वा – leaving aside, स्वप्नविचारम् – a mere dreamland (born of imagination)
(भज – Seek, गोविन्दं – Govind......)

Who are you ? Who am I ? From where did I come ? Who is my mother ? Who is my father ? Thus enquire, leaving aside the entire world-of-experiences (*Visvam*), essenceless and a mere dreamland, born of imagination (*Swapna Vicharam*).
(Seek Govind, Seek Govind.........)

An individual's life in this world is played out in an intricate web of mutual relationship. In the tapestry of existence, individuals and their relationship between each other are the warp and woof. A right relationship between me, and the objects-and-beings around me, can be maintained only from the standpoint of my awareness and understanding of myself. If I am drunk or mad, or by any other reason if I have come to forget myself, I will certainly keep an unhealthy, and even dangerous, relationship with things and beings around.

In life we are called upon to keep intelligent contacts with the world around and, therefore, the most profitable knowledge is, indeed, to know ourselves. In our ignorance of ourselves, we become abnormal and act either as a lunatic or a drunken fool. The poison of ego renders us completely delirious, and hence, we are made to feel shattered and fall into utter dejection, an *Arjuna-sthithi.* Close observation and intelligent enquiry alone are the methods by which all misapprehensions are ended—be it about the outer world of objects, or about the inner world of experiences.

In life it has been well noted that wherever there is a non-apprehension of a thing, mis-apprehensions about it arise. When things of the world are not understood as they are, they start playing their pranks upon the observer and, according to the observer's imaginations, the world becomes a caricature, at once vulgar and ugly, with exaggeration and lop-sided magnifications. Therefore, a spiritual student is advised, in Vedant, to exhaustively and scientifically enquire the "subject" in himself.

Enquire the sources from which we must have risen. Let us not take things for granted. Let us make use of our rational intellect. Enquire wherefrom we have come and where are we bound to—whence ? and whither ? "Who are you ? Who am I ? Where have we come from ? Who is really my mother ? Who is the father ?" —these are the lines of enquiry suggested in the verse along which we must try to investigate in order to end our misconceptions and reach the true apprehension of the Reality.

This is not possible for us at this moment because our mind is not readily available to turn upon itself and make such subjective enquiries. Our minds are at present too much preoccupied with their enchantments regarding the world-of-objects outside. Until a mind gets relieved from these dissipating preoccupations that mind will not have the necessary freedom to apply itself totally in within.

"*Viswam*" is a pregnant sanskrit-word with an endless width and depth in it; for, it contains in its meaning all the human *possibilities of experiences*———physical, emotional and intellectual. "Leaving aside", advises the author Yogananda, "the entire world of experiences (*Viswam*) realize that it is essenceless and that it is a mere dreamland born of imaginations (*Swapnavicharam*)". In the empirical field of experiences, everything perishes constantly and so all are unreal. In Mandokya Karika, Sri Gaudapada argues and shows us logically* that the waking state of experiences are as unreal as our experiences in our dream.

Thus having dismissed all the haunting sense-passions from our mind, turn it towards a close observation of our own subjective personality. Such enquiries will reveal, not only the hollowness of the world of names and forms of endless bewitching enchantments, but it will also reveal the empty vanities of the life as we now live.

This stanza is attributed to Sri Yogananda.

[24]

त्वयि मयि चान्यत्रैको विष्णु –
व्यर्थं कुप्यसि मय्यसहिष्णुः ।
भव समचित्तः सर्वत्र त्वं
वाञ्छस्यचिराद्यदि विष्णुत्वम् ॥
(भज – गोविन्दं भज – गोविन्दं ....)

Twayi Mayi Chaanyatraiko Vishnuh
Vyartham Kupyasi Mayyasahishnuh
Bhava Samachittah Sarvatra Twam
Vanchhasyachiraadyadi Vishnutwam
(Bhaja Govindam, Bhaja Govindam.......)

त्वयि – in you, मयि – in me, च – and, अन्यत्र – in all other places (too); एकः – (there is) but one, विष्णुः – All-Pervading Reality (Vishnu) व्यर्थं – unnecessarily, कुप्यसि – you are getting angry, मयि – with me, असहिष्णुः – being impatient, भव – become, समचित्तः – equal-minded, सर्वत्र – everywhere (in all circumstances), त्वं – you, वाञ्छसि यदि – if you want, अचिरात् – soon, विष्णुत्वं – The *Vishnu* status.

(भज – Seek, गोविन्दं – Govind ......)

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* Sankara in his commentary upon the *Karika* brings this out in a five-membered syllogism (*anuman*). Things seen in waking are illusory (*pratigna*); because they are seen (*hetu*); like the things seen in the dream (*drashtanta*); as in dream there is illusoriness for the things seen so even in waking the characteristic of being seen is the same (*hetu-upanayana*); therefore, even in waking the illusoriness of things is declared (*nigamana*).

> In you, in me and in (all) other places too, there is but one All-Pervading Reality *(Vishnu)*. Being impatient, you are unnecessarily getting angry with me. If you want to attain soon the *Vishnu*-status, be equal minded in all circumstances.
>
> (Seek Govind, Seek Govind......)

The teacher here asserts the Eternal Truth—that has been the experience of thousands of Masters, for thousands of years, in all the different spiritual paths in our country—and declares that "in you, in me, and in all other places too, there is but one All-Pervading Reality *(Vishnu*—the long strident)".

There are certain truths which are so fundamental in a science that a teacher in it can ill afford to avoid the monotony of their repetitions. Intellectual students thirst for knowledge ever hungers for variety, for new ideas for fresh ideals and ever-new Truth-declarations. The inner man seeks variety even at the intellectual level. The laborious repetitions of the teacher sap out the patience of the student, and, perhaps, unconsciously on his face he expresses his restlessness. The teacher noticing it, openly says here, "being impatient, you are unnecessarily angry with me". There is no other way in which this subtle knowledge can be conveyed to the seekers. Repetition alone is the way, for, if the student has already understood, he would never have returned to the Teacher.

When once he has realized the Perfection, there is no necessity for him to feel any more any sense of imperfection. Mandokya Karika* says: "Only in the realm of multiplicity there are doubts and explanations: in the experience of the Oneness there is no doubt and, therefore, no answer is needed".

Therefore, so long as he has not realized the Highest, the Teacher has to talk of the same Truth again and again for purposes of emphasis, until, the student in a flash, comes to realise the Highest, all by himself, in his own heart.

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* Chodyam Va Pariharo Va Kriyatam Dwaita Bhashaya,
Adwaita Bhashaya Chodyam Nasti Naapi Taduttaram.—(Karika),

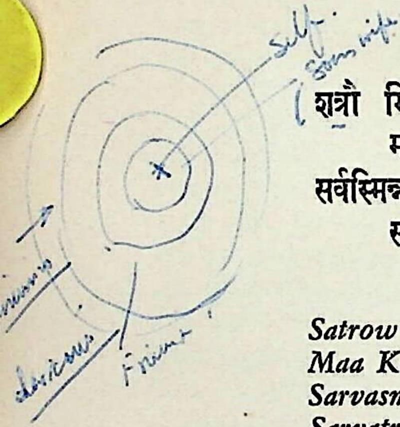
Thus, "it is futile for you, in your impatience, to feel angry with me", says the teacher. "In case, you want to attain soon the great Realm of Peace, *Vishnu-hood,* then", the Teacher advises him, "be equal-minded in all circumstances".

"Please don't get angry if you are not having the experience of the Infinite, even after studying all the voluminous tomes of scriptural literature. There is nothing for you to despair. There is certainly a way to get at the Fulfilment in Knowledge," thus assures the teachers by the general import of their words.

To know of love is indeed quite entertaining, but to experience love and be in it is altogether a different and highly enriching experience. Similarly, to know the Scriptural contents and to intellectually appreciate the Infinite Reality is a satisfying job, no doubt. But it is not the voiceless fulfilment of the all-shattering experience, the utter *Atma-Sakshat-Karah.* In order to gain this, it is not sufficient that we have intellectually followed the textbooks, or have logically understood the arguments in the book. We have to accomplish it solely in our own bosom, for which certain deliberate preparations of the mind are unavoidable. It must be made receptive for the subtle influences from the higher planes-of-Consciousness.

The secret is revealed in this stanza : "practise equanimity of mind *(Samachittatwam)".* While living in the world desirable and undesirable happenings will float-down upon the stream of Time to meet us, and in all these vicissitudes to learn to remain unshaken, is "the practice of even-mindedness" advised here. The external world of objects-and-happenings can disturb us only when we have the positive or the negative *Vasanas* in ourselves. Objects, conducive to our existing *Vasanas,* will attract us, and objects, contrary to our *Vasanas,* will repel us. In order to develop the mental equipoise, one must strive to filter away from one's mind all the existing *Vasanas.* This is accomplished through (1) dedicated action, (2) devotion to the Lord, (3) service of mankind, (4) contemplation upon the Highest and (5) constant study and reflection.

This reminds us of the Bhagavad Geeta which advises the cultivation of this trait as one of the most essential preparations for Gyana, "constant even mindedness, both in desirable and undesirable circumstances".* This *Samatwam*, "equal vision" on all things and beings and in all circumstances, is declared by the Geetacharya† as the very contents of Yoga. When once this equanimity of mind has been regained, ere long *(Achirath)*, the experience of the Infinite shall descend on you and you shall come to gain the status of one "Liberated-in-life" *(Jeevanmuktah)*. This is the experience of *Vishnutwam*.



[25]

(शत्रौ मित्रे पुत्रे बन्धौ
मा कुरु यत्नं विग्रहसन्धौ)।
सर्वस्मिन्नपि पश्यात्मानं
सर्वत्रोत्सृज भेदाज्ञानम् ॥
(भज - गोविन्दं भज - गोविन्दं ....)

Satrow Mitre Putre Bandhow
Maa Kuru Yatnam Vigrahasandhow
Sarvasminaapi Pasyaatmaanam
Sarvatrotsrija Bhedaagnanam
(Bhaja Govindam Bhaja Govindam........)

शत्रौ – against an enemy, मित्रे – against a friend. पुत्रे – against a son, बन्धौ – against a relative, मा – never, कुरु – do, यत्नं – strive, विग्रह-सन्धौ – for strife and for making friends, सर्वस्मिन् अपि – in everything (everywhere), पश्य – see, आत्मानं – the Self, सर्वत्र – everywhere, उत्सृज – lift away, भेद अज्ञानम् – the sense of difference (born out of ignorance).

(भज – Seek, गोविन्दं – Govind......)

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* "Nithyam cha samachitatwam ishta-anisht-upaapathishu" (XII-9)

† Samathwam Yoga Uchyate-II. 48.

> Strive not waste not your energy to fight against or to make friends with your enemy, friend, son or relative. Seeking the Self everywhere, lift the sense-of-difference (plurality), born out of 'ignorance'.
> (Seek Govind, Seek Govind......)

Nobody can afford to hate himself. Even when a part of the body is ulcerated and gives endless pain, and the doctor may advise an amputation, yet man hesitates. The leg that kills me with pain is one with me and I have no enmity with it. But if another one, even if it be my most beloved brother, gives me a little disturbance of mind, I hate him, his wife and his children ! Hatred can come only when we see the thing hated as something other than us.

No doubt, my leg is my own. But even then I do not cultivate purposefully an intimacy with my leg. I never court my leg, nor develop a special friendship with it. It is not necessary. In and through every cell in my body, I live at all spots, at all moments. I am myself an artistic whole, and from the tip of my toe to the roof of my crown everywhere, at all times, I exist. It is ridiculous for me to give a greater love to any part of my body more than any other part. If my teeth unfortunately bite my own tongue, justice is not meted out by me by breaking the teeth. For the tongue is as much mine as the teeth are. Automatically I feel total forgivenness for the teeth, and I comfort and console the tongue that has suffered the tyranny of the teeth.

When the whole universe has emerged out from the One Womb of Reality, who is the other one whom I can afford to hate ! Nor is there one whom I can afford to court particularly and love specially. All are His manifestation alone, including me.

Thus, the author of the stanza, advises a true seeker of this Universal Harmony around, "strive not (waste not your energy) to fight against or to make friends with anyone : be it an enemy, friend, son, or relative." It may be asked then what exactly is life meant for ? What exactly be the direction in which one's emotional energy should flow out? The Acharya gives the answer in the closing two lines of the verse.

If you are a seeker of the Fuller Life, if you are thirsty to hear the Melody in the Harmonious Existence, if you are hungry to taste and enjoy the Essence of Life, seek to realise the One Reality, which holds together the whole universe into one garland of beauty. The universe is a cosmos and not a chaos. There exists a mutual affinity, a scientific law, a rhythm of mutual relationship in which the entire living world is held together, in one web of love. To assume differences in the world, is to belie this great Oneness in life.

In a loveless life, of hate and meanness, of littleness of heart and limited view-point, there is nothing but suffocation, sorrow and agitation. Expand. Come in contact with the melody of the great Flute Player, who enchants us all to dance our life around Him. There is, in fact, none other. Shift your attention to this central Source of Beauty and Song, the rewarding vision of this mass of Flaming Song. In the author's own language, "see the Self everywhere, and rise above the sense of difference, born out of stupidity".

When my beloved children play with mud, and with it look abominably ugly and dirty, do I not see my child in and through the mud and the dirt on him? When my beloved changes her garments do I not see and recognize her always in and through what she wears? Similarly, develop the vision to look far beneath the externals of life, and watch for to detect the One Substratum, the manifestations of which are the convulsions of society, the hysterical expression of love and hatred, together constituting the total world of play around. Whatever be the language in which a music is sung, one who has got the knowledge of the *Raga,* can very easily detect the melody and enjoy it. For enjoying the tune the words need not be familiar. Couched in those words run the ravishing beauty of its melody. Similarly, beneath the surface of the flesh and its fatigues, behind the mind and its wretchednesses, hidden under the intellect and its vulgarities, there runs the enchanting chord of Beauty and Truth. Contact this Infinite Self, and thus, rise above the sense of difference—he, you, they, and I. These have a meaning only with reference to the equipments, but the One Vitalising Force, holds us all together.

In case if any one in the world feels unhappy, miserable, neglected and wretched, it is only his fault and not the fault of the world. Geeta says :* "you yourself is your own friend, and you yourself your own enemy". Happenings around, by themselves, cannot storm our within, but we, in our false-values, give them importance, open the doors of our heart, and allow them to come in to ransack our own bosom with their relentless tyranny. We hate, and then we start recognizing hatred reaching us from all sides. The moment we start loving honestly, sincerely and unconditionally, love of the same depth and texture must reach us back. What we receive in the world is but an echo of our own heart's cry. What we see in others' face is nothing but a reflection of our own feature !

To recognize the One Eternal Source, as expressing through all the names and forms, is to change the very nature of our environment, the very vision of our world around. Kathopanishad expresses this one cardinal Truth in the most poetic form and says : "just as one fire having reached various wicks expresses itself as different flames, so the One Truth, burning in different bosoms, expresses as the good, the bad, the wretched, the noble."† Isavasya Upanishad declares that having realized this One Substratum in the Universe, the man of realisation has thereafter no occasion to feel repelled (*Jugupsa*) from anything or from any situation".‡

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* "Athmaiva Athmano bandhuh athmaiva ripu rathmanah"—Geeta-VI-5

† "Eko vasee sarva bhutarama, roopam roopam parti, roopo bhabhuva......Agniry edhaiko bhuvanam pratishto roopam roopam pratiroopo bhabhuva" (*Katho*)

‡ "Tato na vijugupsate."—*Isa*

An incapacity in us to be in harmony with the situation, or with an individual, and the consequent discordant ruffle in our bosom, is called *Jugupsa.* This cannot take place when we see our own Self expressed everywhere—just as a mother cannot have any revulsion *(Jugupsa)* for her own child, because, to her the child is a part and parcel of her own life's essence. Isa Upanishad, while discussing this State of Realisation, goes to the extent of even exclaiming,* "there, what delusion, what sorrow, can reach where one experiences the Oneness everywhere?"

[26]

कामं क्रोधं लोभं मोहं
त्यक्त्वाऽऽत्मानं पश्यति सोऽहम् ।
आत्मज्ञान विहीना मूढा-
स्ते पच्यन्ते नरकनिगूढाः ॥
(भज-गोविन्दं-भज गोविन्दं..........)

Kaamam Krodham Lobham Moham
Tyaktwaa(a)tmaanam Pasyati Soham
Aatmagyana Viheenaa Mudaah
Te Pachyante Narakanigoodaah
(Bhaja Govindam, Bhaja Govindam.......)

कामः – Desire, क्रोध – anger, मोहं – delusion, त्यक्त्वा – having left, आत्मानं – the Self, पश्यति – see (the seeker), सः अहम् – "He am I", आत्मा ज्ञान विहीना – those who have not Self-Knowledge; मूढा – the fools, ते – they, पच्यन्ते – are tortured, नरक निगूढाः – in hell as captives.
(भज – Seek, गोविन्दं – Govind......)

Leaving desire, anger, greed and delusion, the seeker sees in the Self, "He am I". They are fools who have not Self-Knowledge and they (consequently), as captives in hell are tortured.

(Seek Govind, Seek Govind.....)

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* "Tatra ko moha, ka sokha, ekatwam anupasyatah."—*Isa.*

The conditions under which the seeker reaches the State of God-realisation is painted here vividly by the author, Bharathi Vamsa. So long as we are not able to get rid completely of all our unnecessary mental agitations and the natural extrovertedness, this subtle melody of the Infinite Bliss cannot be contacted or clearly received, in our bosom. Therefore, the Acharya says, "leaving desire, anger, greed and delusion", the seeker must strive with an enthusiastic alertness, to feel the inspired experience of the Transcendental Reality. Such a true seeker when he realises this Eternal Harmony in life, he "understands" the Truth—not as we generally *understand* things in the world outside.

All our knowledges in the outer world are "objective" and, therefore, we understand them as something other than ourselves. This Spiritual Truth being the very core of our own existence, the realization when it comes, it will not be that I have understood It (Him), but the experience will be, "He am I" *(Soham)*—"That am I" *(Tatwamsi)*. This is something like discovering, after a lot of searching the lost key, at last, in your own pocket ! No doubt the man will cry out "I have *got* the key"...... "I have *got* the key". But, in fact, there was no "getting it". It was only a process of discovering the key, that was already there in his pocket which was lying concealed under his own *ignorance of its existence.*

So too, this Perfect State of Tranquillity is man's Real Nature. Due to "desire, anger, greed and delusion" this bliss seems to be for him veiled from himself, and when his agitations are quietened, behind it stands the True, in all Its resplendency.

Angry and impatient, restless and agitated, when Radha waits for the Lord under the tree, some rough hand sweetly closes her eyes from behind. She protests. Gets angry. Gets worried. Really afraid. Holding the hand that covers her eyes, she fights, howls, curses. And in the end discovers that the very hands that covered her eyes belong to the very one for whom she was waiting for all the time ! Once the passions of the heart are removed, Truth, self-evident, stands revealed as the very Eternal sweetness of Perfection.

He who has not gained this Self Knowledge *(Atma Gnana)*, who has not experienced this Infinite Perfection, comes to live in a sorrowful misunderstanding that life is a stream of vulgar sorrows, perspiring passions, exhausting desires and endless sentiments; and he, indeed, is a crown jewel among fools *(Moodha Siromani)*. In the non-apprehension of Reality, misapprehensions of Ego, and its desires, greed and anger, likes and dislikes, and such other misapprehensions arise and they create a self-made hell for man to live in and suffer continuously. Tortured by them, torn limb by limb by the buffeting waves of passions in his own bosom, man cries as a sorrowful creature, eternally suffering in a self-condemned existence, in a hell, created by himself, for himself ! !

This stanza reminds us of another verse attributed generally to Sankara* which says "desire, anger, greed are looters that stand within the body, ready to plunder the Knowledge-gem——therefore, be vigilant ! Be vigilant !"

Therefore, to sum up, renounce desire, anger and greed, and come to experience in your own personal subjective experience, that "He am I"; this alone is the fulfilment of a man's mission in life. In fact God alone is : the concept of "I" is a stupid dream. Surrender and realize. Through right Knowledge reject what you are not, and assert your Real nature, and come to realize the Oneness of the Life in you and the Life everywhere present.

[27]

hindu life

Study. गेयं गीतानामसहस्रं — only indication of internal
Practise ध्येयं श्रीपतिरूपमजस्रम् ।
Take नेयं सज्जनसङ्गे चित्तं
Share. देयं दीनजनाय च वित्तम् ॥
(भज – गोविन्दं भज – गोविन्दं ....)

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*Kama Krodhascha lobhascha dehe this hanti taskarah,
Gnanarathna-apaharaya tasmat jagratha jagaratha.

Geyam Geetaanaamasahastram
Dhyeyam Sreepatiroopamajasram
Neyam Sajjanasange Chittam
Deyam Deenajanaaya Cha Vittam
(Bhaja Govindam, Bhaja Govindam.........)

गेयं – is to be chanted (sung), गीता – Bhagavad Geeta, नामसहस्र – Sahasranamam, ध्येयं – is to be meditated upon, श्रीपति रूपं – the form of the Lord of Lakshmi, अजस्रं – always; नेयं – (the mind) is to be led, सज्जनसङ्गे – in the association (company) of the good, चित्तं – the mind; देयं – is to be distributed, दीनजनाय च – to the needy, वित्तं – wealth.

(भज – Seek, गोविन्दं – Govind ......)

> Bhagavad Geeta and Sahasranama are to be chanted; always the form of the Lord of Lakshmi is to be meditated upon; the mind is to be led towards the company of the good; wealth is to be distributed (shared with) the needy.
>
> (Seek Govind, Seek Govind........)

This verse represents the conclusion of the "*Bouquet of 14-Verse-Blossoms*",* and it is attributed to the last of the fourteen followers of Sankara who were with him in this particular Kasi-pilgrimage of the Acharya. The author is named, traditionally, as Sri Sumati.

It is indeed a fitting last-stanza inasmuch as it declares a spiritual, programme which a student can follow when once he is convinced of the necessity of realizing the Highest. Advices of all spiritual preceptors are worded the same, but very rarely the students try to understand their significance. Here also there is nothing new in the advice as such. It only enumerates four unavoidable "musts" in the daily programme of a sincere seeker : (1) Geeta study, (2) worship of Narayana, (3) company of the good, and (4) serving the needy.

Bhagavad Geeta is a summary of the Upanishadic truths with special reference to their practical application in man's everyday conduct in life. To study them intelligently is to bring about a reorientation in our intellectual outlook on life, and in our attitudes to the world of happenings around. It explains both the goal and the path, and also gives different techniques of living religion in our everyday life.

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* Caturdasa-Manjarika-Stotram

Study in itself cannot accomplish self-unfoldment in the seeker, although study is absolutely necessary for the intellectual satisfaction of the seekers. The ideas which are rationally appreciated may not bring by themselves their promised glow to life, unless one lives them deligently and thus brings them within the subjective experience of oneself. Philosophy enumerates ideals and supplies the logical sequence of thinking by which contemplative minds can come to appreciate the entire implications of the philosophers' viewpoint.

But without a definite technique of living up to those values the best philosophy can only be a mere utopian dream. All the practical methods, by which philosophical ideas are woven into our everyday life, together in their entirety constitute the very essence in all true religions. Hence teachers of the past, like Vivekananda and others cried, that religion without philosophy is superstition and philosophy without religion is a lunatic dream !

When a seeker has studied the Geeta and has understood its logic, he has to plough those perfections into himself, and this is done through religion, indicated here by the term "worship of the Lord of Lakshmi". To contemplate upon "the thousand-and-one glories of Narayana" (*Sahasranama*), and to thus learn to surrender ourselves at His altar, and thereby get ourselves attuned to Him is true worship. This helps to integrate the inner personality, lifting our mind high above its ordinary fields of self-polluting agitations. By tuning the mind with the Higher it imbibes unto itself the noble qualities of the very "Lord of Nobility", Sree Lakshmipathi.

All our efforts at study and worship can be washed down in a single moment's high-tide of passion in the bosom. To protect the fields of our heart from such tornadoes, "company of the good" (*Sajjanasangam*) is very essential. To be in the company of noble spiritual leaders, cultured men of inspiring vision, will keep us constantly warmed up in our enthusiasm to live up to our ideals.

Again, *Satsang* helps us to walk the path with an assuring self-confidence, wherein fear and hesitation, despondency and despair have no chance to despoil our sincerity and eagerness. In the constant association with the noble souls alone can our knowledge of the Scriptures become clear and the devotion of our hearts can become really deep and firm.

An individual seeker may 1. study the Geeta, 2. practise religion and 3. pursue the "company of the good", and yet, his evolution cannot be assured unless in his daily contacts with his fellow men he has got the heroism to live the spiritual ideals of the One Infinite Life everywhere. The Lord of my heart is the One Indweller in all bosoms.* If I fail to revere the Lord in the heart of all, but worship Him elaborately with flowers and bells only in the inert, metal or wooden idols, I am to be certain, not a very sincere and true devotee.

Therefore, the teacher here insists that the seeker of the Lord must practise "charity"; this is very often misunderstood by even those who diligently, practise it. "Charity" must flow from one's own abundance. Thus, the first requirement would be efforts to earn sufficiently in order that you may share it with those who have a need for that commodity which they have not got now in themselves.

"Charity" is an attempt wherein I try to expand and bring into the ambit of my life all others around me and grow to consider the other man's needs and requirements as important as my own personal needs. To live seeking an identity thus with atleast those who are immediately around me is to live away from the suffocating selfishness and the throttling grip of my body-consciousness. To ignore the needs of others around, is not religion. Religious unfoldment can reach only a heart that has steadily unrolled itself to invite into its chambers a wider circle of loving brotherhood.

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* Kshetragyam cha api mam viddhi sarva kshetreshu Bharatha-Geeta XIII-3.

[28]

सुखतः क्रियते रामाभोगः
पश्चाद्धन्त शरीरे रोगः
यद्यपि लोके मरणं शरणं
तदपि न मुञ्चति पापाचरणम् ॥
(भज - गोविन्दं भज गोविन्दं........)

Sukhatah Kriyate Raamaabhogah
Paschaddhanta Sareere Rogah
Yadyapi Loke Maranam Saranam
Tadapi Na Munjchati Paapaacharanam
(Bhaja Govindam, Bhaja Govindam..........)

सुखतः For sake of happiness, क्रियते – (is done) or one indulges in ; रामा भोगः – carnal pleasures, पश्चात् – later on, हन्तः – alas, शरीरे – in the body, रोगः – disease (comes), यद्यपि – even though, लोके – in the world, मरणं – death, शरणं (is) the ultimate end, यदपि – even then, न – (he) does not, मुन्चति – leaves, पाप आचरणम् – sinful behaviour (भज – Seek, गोविन्दं – Govind ......)

Very readily one indulges in carnal pleasures, later on, alas come diseases of the body. Even though in the world the ultimate end *(Saranam)* is death, even then man leaves not his sinful behaviour.

(Seek Govind, Seek Govind.......)

In the scheme of the development of thought in this sacred philosophical chant (*Stotram*) we have the first twelve-verses attributed to Sankara and the following fourteen-verses attributed to the fourteen great followers, who accompanied the Acharya in one of his trips to Kasi.

We have now in these concluding four tail-end-stanzas a fitting conclusion for the entire sacred chant.

Here, the spiritual seeker is directly addressed to and he is encouraged and blessed by the Acharya. In the absence of any evidence to disprove, it will not be very wrong, for the purposes of our own inspiration, if we accept these closing stanzas as the declarations made directly by the Teacher of the Adwaita. In fact, the vigour of expressions employed, the anxiety with which the impatient words flow down each verse, the depth of significance, and the breadth of their philosophical embrace——all definitely point out that it must be the enchanting words of the Master from Kaladi himself.

To live in the animal instincts is no strain at all for man, because it is a devolutionary process : to fall and slip down the slopes of a mountain is much easier than to climb across the summits to its very peak. Evolution is the result of effort and struggle, sweat and suffering. There is no new birth ever possible without its own delivery pains.

Thus, to live in the flesh, implicity obeying its wretched biddings, is universally easy for all. This is simply because the flesh craves constantly and, therefore, to live in sense gratification no practice is necessary; everybody seems to be very competent and extremely adept in it. The animal in us is yet to fight against its own low instincts and come to win the divine mastery over the flesh.

One who thus freely indulges in excessive self-dissipations soon comes to suffer, alas *(Hantha)*, the persecutions of an invading army of merciless diseases. Physically suffering many pains and disabilities, his faculties slowly decaying, and he ultimately comes to tumble down into some unwarranted grave !

Even when death is thus inherent and implicit in the very birth and existence of the individual, man leaves not his sinful behaviour. Actions, that bring about dissipation of the personality-strength at all levels are called sins *(papas)*.

The verse is not merely an uncoloured observation of man, as he lives now in the world, but there is a strain of sorrow in the very cadence of the verse. Even those who realize that the ultimate destination is death and complete obliteration thereafter of the individual from the surface of the globe, yet, he finds it difficult to take himself away from his temptations to do the wrong actions.

This is Maya——the vigorous push-and-pull of the *Vasanas* to express themselves. They *push* us into sin, and *pull* us away from our attempts to live the nobler and the diviner virtues of spiritual living.

Money is very dangerous thing.
could be compared with a cub.

[29]

अर्थमनर्थं भावय नित्यं
नास्ति ततः सुखलेशः सत्यम्
पुत्रादपि धनभाजां भीतिः
सर्वत्रैषा विहिता रीतिः ॥
(भज - गोविन्दं भज - गोविन्दं ....)

Arthamanartham Bhavaya Nithyam
Naasti Tatah Sukhalesah Sathyam
Puthradapi Dhanabhajaam Bheetih
Sarvatraisha Vihita Reetih
(Bhaja Govindam, Bhaja Govindam..........)

अर्थं – Wealth, अनर्थं – (is) calamitous, भावय – (thus) reflect, नित्यं - constantly, न अस्ति – there is not, ततः – from it, सुखलेशः – (even) a little happiness, सत्यं – truth, पुत्रात् अपि – even from his own son, धनभाजां – to the rich, भीतिः – there is fear, सर्वत्र – everywhere, एषा – this, विहिता – is (the ordained), रीतिः – the way.

(भज – Seek, गोविन्दं – Govind ....)

"Wealth is calamitous", thus reflect constantly : the truth is that there is no happiness at all to be got from it. To the rich, there is fear even from his own son. This is the way of wealth everywhere.

(Seek Govind, Seek Govind........)

If, as the teacher has expressed in the previous stanza, the enchantments of the lower nature in us are to be so all-powerful in us, then philosophy and its visions are profitless dreams—mere poetic consolations——dreadful opiated hallucinations. A scientist must face facts; he sees things as they are, and plans to improve the world and the life thriving upon it. The above stanza is a naked statement over a couple of facts, known to all and realized by everyone whatever be the field of their functions in life.

Every creative thinker is an impatient revolutionary inasmuch as he is not satisfied with merely maintaining the *status quo* in life. His demand is always to pull down the edifice-of-sorrow and rebuild in its place the temple-of-joy. The Maya-fascination for what money can procure—or at least promises to procure—is so powerful in us that we never give wealth its right and appropriate value. It is strange, indeed, that money was discovered and made by man, and yet, man has become a slave to the very thing which is his own creation. To-day Money rules the foolish man.

The teacher here advises the seekers of the higher life to reflect constantly that "wealth is calamitous" (*Arthamanartham*). By repeatedly remembering the dangers of wasting one's entire life under the fascinations for wealth, the delusory enchantments for money as *such*, will retire from ones heart. Money no doubt has a value; but it is only inasmuch as it can procure things for us. But, to give an over-exaggerated importance to money as *such* is thoughtlessness, and it will breed lovelessness, hatred and a thousand subhuman impulses in the money-mad people.

Strange ! Wealth estranges us all. It is all very strange, the money psychology ! When you have not got any, you will pant to get some ! When you get some, you grow jealous of others who have more, and feel conceited among those who have less !

In the grabbing-game, in profit-hunting commerce of the world when you become a little more successful, your jealousy and conceit are not thereby going to recede proportionately, but, strange, in the arithmetics of the money-mad world your jealousy becomes powerful, and your conceit limitless.

Not only more wealth brings more jealousies and conceits but the individual starts entertaining unholy suspicions and unhappy fears——suspicions that those who have not got, as much as you have, are planning to destroy you, and the fears that they may loot away all what you have, from your secret treasures.

Wealth is not welfare——*Artham anartham.* As Acharya Sankara indicates here, even one's own son becomes a source of fear for the unholy man of riches. Therefore, ever keep, in one corner of your mind the same idea that money or wealth is only a means, and not an end in itself: "wealth is calamitous". Have it in sufficient measure——to use it; liberally, employ it in your service. Let not money use you or employ you in its service. When you possess money, wealth is a blessing. Allow money to possess you, wealth is a curse and it will give you not even a suspicion of comfort (*sukha lesah*). This is the truth (*Satyam*) about wealth. This the way-of-wealth.

[30]

with drawing
[illegible] - [illegible]

प्राणायामं प्रत्याहारं
नित्यानित्यविवेकविचारम् । [illegible] - [illegible]
जाप्यसमेत समाधिविधानं
[illegible] - [illegible]
कुर्ववधानं महदवधानं ॥
(भज – गोविन्दं भज – गोविन्दं........)

Praanaayaamam Pratyaahaaram
Nityaanityavivekavichaaram
Jaapyasameta Samaadhividhaanam
Kurvavadhaanam Mahadavadhaanam
(Bhaja Govindam, Bhaja Govindam......)

प्राणायाम The control of all activities (of Life's manifestations in you) प्रत्याहारं – the sense withdrawal (from their respective sense objects,) नित्य अनित्य विवेक विचारम् – the enquiry (reflection) consisting of discrimination between the permanent and the impermanent; of जाप्य समेत समाधि विधानम् – along with japa, and the practice of reaching the total inner silence (समाधि), कुरु – perform, अवधानं – with care, महत् अवधानं – with great care.

(भज – Seek, गोविन्दं – Govind......)

> The control of all activities (of life's manifestations in you) the sense withdrawal (from their respective sense-objects) the reflection (consisting of discrimination between the permanent and the impermanent), along with Japa and practice of reaching the total-inner-silence (*Samadhi*)———these perform with care ....with great care.
>
> (Seek Govind, Seek Govind.........)

Now Sankara advises a seeker, who has thus withdrawn his mind from all its hunting after "wealth"*, in the outer world of mind-and-matter, of men-and-things, of joy-and-sorrows. The seeker should learn to control all the subjective activities within his personality. A path in five stages was drawn up, by which, a true seeker, who has accomplished all the conditions that the teacher had prescribed, can easily trot up to his goal. Study of the Geeta, worship of Lord, satsang and charity along with the elimination of all the wealth-hunting distractions by a process of correct thinking, together constitute, what in Vedanta we call, 'the outer exercises" (*Bahiranga Sadhana*).

Here, in the stanza we have all the elements of "inner exercise" (*Antaranga Sadhana*). They are as indicated by Sankara : (1) control of all life's activities in the body (*pranayama*), (2) the sense withdrawal (*pratyahara*), (3) discrimination (*Nithya-anithya-viveka-vicharam*). (4) japa, and (5) as a cumulative effect of all these reaching a state of utter silence within, which is the spring board to the Highest (*Samadhi*).

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* A term used in its largest sense.

Pranayama is a term, due to its hasty translation and equally superficial practice, has come to be translated and known among us as "breath control". In Sanskrit to express "breath control" we have altogether a different phrase (*Swaasa-yama*). "Prana" in Sanskrit means "life", and as used by the Upanishad-seers, they have considered it as consisting of five distinct modifications.

There five distinct names, in their Upanishadic definitions, are found to stand for the five physiological "systems" of activity . . . the five active departments of manifested life in a living intelligent man. They are, perceptions and reception of things into the subjective life (*Prana*); rejection of things and responses *(Apana);* the digestive system *(Vyana);* the circulatory system *(Samana);* and the capacity to lift ourselves from our present state of understanding to a nobler and better peak of thought on the mount of knowledge (*Udana*). To control all these five expressions of life in a living being is called "Control of Prana" *(Pranayama)*.

In order to achieve this, one of the outer methods generally advised, to the dull in temperament and to the inefficient in emotions, is a system of very regulated exercises of breathing. True *Pranayama* can really be achieved only through sustained and sincere practice, for sufficiently long time, of devotion to the Lord, of study of the Scriptures and of selfless service of the Society.

When a seeker has thus succeeded in controlling the outflow of life's energy into its spectacular manifestations, he must also learn to roll his mind back to himself, away from its wanderings through the sense-organs into the sense-world. This capacity to whistle back the wandering mental-rays away from its sense-objects back into our bosom is called *Pratyahara.*

Neither *Pranayama* nor *Pratyahara* is possible unless the intellect is re-educated to hold enduring and healthy values-of-life. And hence the importance of developing a discriminative intellect that can readily make us see through the impermanent *(Anithya)* glitter of the multiplicity and recognize the Eternal *(Nithya),* Immutable Truth. This can come only through constant, scientific thinking, as indicated in the greatest of all philosophical text-books that man has today...called the Upanishads.

In order to develop the required subtlety of intellect and discover in it the necessary amount of balance and vigour, the intellect still must undergo a certain type of pre-*vichar* training and this is available in Japa*.

When through *Japa,* the intellect has become steady, it discovers in itself a better capacity to understand the subtler suggestions and the deeper imports of the Upanishadic declaration, and thus it comes to recognize and develop *Viveka* in itself. With the help of this "power of discrimination" which can distinguish the Real from the unreal, the individual gains a dexterity in withdrawing his mind from the unreal. This capacity to withdraw ones attention from the unreal is called *Pratyahara.*

When such a discriminating man could withdraw his mind at will, without much difficulty, from all sense-objects, in him, the control over his physiological activities is almost perfect.

When thus the seeker has, at all the layers of his personality, tuned himself with the Highest, his flesh, mind and intellect will not ever come to disturb him, during his contemplations upon the Real. They will retire from their respective fields of explosive activities, and in this hushed silence within—a state of relative thoughtlessness *(Samadhi)*—the stage is set for him to receive unobstructed intimations from the Infinite.

This State of Final Beatitude, is never as such expressed in any *Sastra*——only the last stage of the human effort, called the practice of *Samadhi* alone is indicated. The final experience is not gained by anyone; it is there already with all of us. Practice of *Samadhi* only lifts the veil, and reveals what was, is and shall ever be the Eternal Nature of the Infinite: "That Thou Art", roars the teacher in the Chandogya-Upanishad.

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* Refer Swamiji's book-let "Kindle Life"—Chapter on "Japa Yoga & Gayatri".

† Refer Swamiji's Atmabodha Commentaries on stanza 44. Also refer "Agyanena Avritham Gyanam, Tena Muhyanthi Janthavah"s—Geeta: V, 15 : "The Real is veiled by the Unreal and so the Creatures suffer delusion."

These various disciplines at the mental, intellectual and physical levels are to be undertaken......with an artistic poise, with a literary delicacy, a poetic finish. There is no question of forcing the mind, crushing the instincts, or belabouring the passions. Force will create only suppressions, deformities and abominable ugliness of personality. There cannot be any hurry in the natural unfoldment of one's personality.

Hurry is known to all creative expressions in nature outside—the sun rising, the moon setting, the blossoming of the buds the arrival of the fruits, the germination of the seeds, the foetus in the womb, the bird in the egg, all have no hurry, but each takes its own time to grow and emerge out. If the seeker tries to hurry up and double up his march to reach the goal, "haste is waste" on the path of Truth. This warning is so beautifully given here when Sankara advises so lovingly, "please perform with care ......with great care (*Avadhanam Mahad-avadhanam*)."

[illegible] - I am bowing down on the platform.

[31]

अम्बुज - Lotus.

is goal. perfectio

[illegible]

गुरुचरणाम्बुजनिर्भरभक्तः
संसारादचिराद्भव मुक्तः ।
सेन्द्रियमानसनियमादेवं
द्रक्ष्यसि निजहृदयस्थं देवम् ॥
(भज – गोविन्दं भज – गोविन्दं ....)

to see.

Gurucharanaambuja Nirbharabhakthah
Samsaaraadachiraadbhava Mukthah
Sendripamaanasaniyamaadevam
Drakshyasi Nijahridayastham Devam
(Bhaja Govindam, Bhaja Govindam......)

गुरु चरण अंबुज निर्भरः भक्तः – Great devotee of the lotus feet of the Teacher, संसारात् – from the samsara, अचिरात् – soon, भव मुक्तः –

become liberated; सः इन्द्रिय मानसं नियमात् – through the discipline of the sense-organs and the mind, एवं – in this manner, द्रक्ष्यसि – you will experience, निज हृदयस्थं – that dwells in one's own heart, देवं – the Lord.

(भज – Seek, गोविन्दं – Govind ......)

> Oh ! Devotee of the Lotus-feet of the Teacher ! May you become liberated soon from the *Samsar* through the discipline of the sense-organs and the mind. You will come to experience (behold) the Lord that dwells in your own heart.
>
> (Seek Govind, Seek Govind......)

Faith and devotion to a Guru are necessary in order to ease the student's path and level down the slopes *en route* his pilgrimage. Faith is a very powerful secret source of energy in the human bosom. One of the greatest definitions of "faith" has been given to us by St. Augustine when he says : "Faith is to believe what you do not see and the reward of this faith is to see what you believe".

What the teacher says we cannot immediately apprehend, but the logic of his discourses helps us to intellectually comprehend it. When we have once embraced an ideal to the bosom of our dimly comprehending intellect, *belief* in that ideal becomes natural. Thus, *faith* indeed is that secret power in the human mind to hold on to what he intellectually believes but has not yet come to experience (see) in his life.

And this secret might of *faith* ultimately takes man, as though upon the comfortable wings of some magic, to his destination of fulfilment, in a total and complete experience. Sans faith in the teacher the student is a wayfarer entirely blind, completely deaf and sadly paralysed.

Acharya Sankara addresses here his students of all times, and across the mounting centuries to the end of infinity he blesses all pursuers of this path. "May you become liberated from *Samsar,* soon", is the burden of the Master's good-wishes.

This liberation is not in some distant time and in some distant place; it is here and now. This is indicated, by the Champion of Adwaïta, by again blessing the student, "through discipline of the sense-organs and the mind, may you come to experience (behold) the Lord that dwells in your own heart".

Sincere adoration and devoted surrender to the Teacher is indeed practised, not only by the disciple-class but even by the teachers themselves. Acharya Sankara by this stanza is, perhaps, prostrating to his own teacher. For, it is not a mere happy coincidence here to remember that Sankara's own teacher was Govindacharya——*"Bhaja Govindam Bhaja Govindam. . . . ."*

In the Upanishads also the importance of teachers have been very frequently indicated. Mundakyopanishad prescribes* the qualities of a true teacher. Again, in Chandogya Upanishad the Rishi has once for ever blasted even the possible traces of any doubt regarding the necessity of a teacher on the path of spiritual progress. The Upanishad says† : "One who has a teacher alone comes to realise".

With prostrations to the Teacher, this essential Manual on Vedant (*Prakriya*-book) concludes : *"Bhaja Govindam, Bhaja Govindam. . . . ."*.

Bhaja Govindam is considered generally among the minor works of Sankara. All great scriptural masters have a knack of giving the Highest Truth, at their greatest moments of inspiration, in the simplest language. The artificially bloated intellects of the professorial pundits will generally declare such works as minor.

Because of the simplicity of the vocabulary employed, the melody of the verses, the cadence in the metre chosen and the general atmosphere of song and thrill in this congregation-song, Bhaja Govindam has become very popular in our country, and till recently we could hear these stanzas in almost all the streets, throughout the length and breadth of Bharat. Children lisped it, boys thundered it, intelligent people appreciated it, philosophers enjoyed it and practitioners *(Sadhaks)* made use of these stanzas and fulfilled their life.

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* Sa Gurum-eva-abhigacheth, Samit-panih, Strotriyam Brahmanishtam—Mundaka I-II. 12.

† "Acharyavan purusho Vedha"—*Chandogya.*

When anything is so frequently used, by such a large number of people, all over the country, with all licentiousness, for about ten centuries, the thing, even if it be only a poem must carry with it signs of wear and tear. No two publications, of this great song of devotion, pregnant with philosophical suggestions, is the same. I have followed a reading which struck me as the best in bringing out all the essential truths in their ampler suggestiveness.

The poem, as it stands now has got thirty-one stanzas. The opening verse is the refrain, and it is used for the crowd to chant in the congregation as a chorus, while a selected few chanted the other stanzas one by one. The first set of twelve-stanzas (2-13) is attributed, as we have already mentioned earlier, to Adi Sankara himself, while the following fourteen stanzas (14-27) are attributed to the fourteen disciples, who were with the master in his pilgrimage to Kasi.

Now really speaking, there are no evidences to prove the exact individual authorship of these 14 verses....we cannot say which stanza belongs to whom. Nothing is definitely known, since in the storms of time, they all have got so totally mixed up and erased ! No direct evidences are available; we have but some traditional heresay evidences.

The last four concluding stanzas (28-31) are again attributed to Acharya Sankara, and the poem pregnant with its philosophical meaning, comes to a close in a most befitting manner with the blessings of Acharya Sankara upon all true seekers.

May His blessings be always upon us all.

OM TAT SAT